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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

(OFFICIAL AND FAMILIAR)

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH, K.B.

UNIV. OF MICH.

Gr. Duke of Tuscany with the Star

London: Henry Colburn, 1848

London: Henry Colburn 1848

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

(OFFICIAL AND FAMILIAR)

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH, K.B.,

ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY AT THE COURTS OF DRESDEN, COPENHAGEN, AND VIENNA, FROM 1769 TO 1792.

WITH A MEMOIR OF

QUEEN CAROLINA MATILDA OF DENMARK,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE REVOLUTION THERE IN 1772.

EDITED BY

MRS. GILLESPIE SMYTH.

Letters—the living thoughts of a race departed; the record of their playful humours and buoyant fancies, their fresh, cordial, overflowing love! . . . . We go through the world, blaming its coldness, and cursing its cruelties, and its crimes; but all unconscious of the vast riches of joy, and intellect, and affection, which hem us in on all sides, and overflow continually into the Eternal Sea. Thanks be to an all-gracious God, who has caused them to flow!—HOWITT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1849.

LONDON :
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

Ref. St.
Boghallen
1-19-28
15681

CONTENTS

OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE

FAMILIAR CORRESPONDENCE WITH MARSHAL CONWAY, &c. 1

OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE FROM VIENNA 205

OFFICIAL AND FAMILIAR CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE CONGRESS OF SISTOVO IN TURKEY, IN 1791 . 306

INDEX TO THE LETTERS.

PAGE

AINSLIE, SIR ROBERT, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 476

APSLEY, LORD, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 160

ARBUTHNOT, MR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 201

AUCKLAND, LORD, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 265—268, 350, 375, 394, 442, 450, 462, 487, 517, 519—521, 524, 526, 527

PAGE

BOYD, MR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 149

BRYDONE, PATRICK, ESQ., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 96

CAMPBELL, LORD FREDERICK, TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 48, 56

CONWAY, GENERAL, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 20, 25, 26, 106, 153, 173, 177

COOPER, SIR GREY, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 170

CZARTORISKI, PRINCE ADAM, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 187

DARLINGTON, LORD, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 188

DOUGLAS, CAPT., R.N., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 64

ELLIOTT, MR. HUGH, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 58

EWART, MR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 447

FREDERICK, DUKE OF YORK, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 170, 175, 190, 197

HARDWICKE, THE EARL OF, TO MRS. ANNE MURRAY KEITH . . 537

HARRIS, SIR JAMES, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 165

HEATHFIELD, LORD, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 163

HOWARD, MR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 186, 203, 204

KAUNITZ, PRINCE DE, TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 321, 322, 492

KEITH, SIR R. M., TO MR. STRATTON 449

——— ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ. 78, 82, 89, 100, 109, 117, 123, 125, 126, 129, 140, 146, 156, 158, 167, 171, 178, 191

——— HIS FATHER 16

——— HIS SISTERS 111, 113, 137, 249, 253, 254, 256, 258, 261, 263, 297, 300, 304, 307, 308, 311, 324, 341, 344, 354, 373, 380, 383, 386, 396, 400, 403, 404, 411, 446, 472, 478, 480, 483, 489

——— LORD SUFFOLK 53

PAGE

KEITH, SIR R. M., TO MR. CHAMIER . 32, 35, 38, 40, 44, 70, 72, 76
——— MR. EWART 294, 295, 296, 457
——— MR. PITT 238, 246
MR. TREVOR 243
PHILIP YORKE, ESQ. . . 80, 87, 95, 115, 155
THE DUKE OF LEEDS 247, 250, 252, 277, 284, 313, 315, 329, 331, 335, 337, 347, 352, 355, 359, 363, 366, 368, 370, 371, 378, 379, 387, 389, 390, 392, 418
——— THE LORD CHIEF BARON MONTGOMERY . 50, 52
——— THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN 208, 218, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 232, 234, 235, 236, 239
LORD GRENVILLE 420, 421, 423, 428, 429, 430, 434, 436, 452, 454, 458, 460, 463, 464, 467, 469, 471, 473, 475, 477, 484, 493, 495, 497—503, 509, 511, 515, 522, 523

KINGSTON, THE DUCHESS OF, TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 65

LEEDS, THE DUKE OF, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 241

MONTAGU, DUKE OF, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 164
——— MRS., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 104

PAYNE, SIR RALPH, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 198
PIOZZI, MRS., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 105

RIGBY, MR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 119
ROBERTSON, DR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 60
ROSENBERG, COUNT, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 186

ST. ASAPH, LORD, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 144
SCOTT, SIR WALTER, TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. LINDSAY . . 539
SEBRIGHT, SIR JOHN, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 189

PAGE

STORMONT, LORD, TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 102, 124, 128

SUFFOLK, THE EARL OF, TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 31, 47

TRENCK, BARON, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 182

TREVOR, MR., TO SIR R. M. KEITH 443

VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE HUMDRUM CONGRESS . . . 411

WIMPFFEN, GENERAL, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 181

WRAXALL, NATHANIEL, TO SIR R. M. KEITH 84

YORKE, SIR JOSEPH, TO SIR R. M. KEITH . . . 62, 79, 91, 185

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH.

AMONGST the most interesting as well as distinguished of Sir R. M. Keith's familiar correspondents was the celebrated Marshal Conway, better known, perhaps, to the reader of modern times from the letters and memoirs of Horace Walpole than from the conspicuous part which his talents, and, still more, his rare integrity, assigned to him in the military and political history of his time. He was the second son of Francis first Lord Conway; Secretary in Ireland during the viceroyalty of the Duke of Devonshire; Secretary of State in 1765; Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance in 1770; Commander-in-Chief in 1782; and a Field-Marshal in 1793.

Of the chivalric character by which, in early youth, this delightful man was distinguished, and which accompanied him, not only to the field of fame, but through all the crooked politics of a factious period, we find abundant traits in the letters of Horace Walpole.* He thus writes in May, 1745 :—

* Of Conway, Walpole, so generally depreciatory of every one, says, "In an age wherein honesty could boast but of few genuine martyrs, Conway

"My Dear Harry,

"As gloriously as you have set out, yet I despair of seeing you a perfect hero! You have none of the charming violences which are so essential to that character. You write as coolly, after behaving well in a battle, as you fought in it. Can your friends flatter themselves with seeing you, one day or other, be the death of thousands, when you wish for peace in three days after your first engagement;* and laugh at the ambition of those who have given you this opportunity of distinguishing yourself? With the person of an Oroondates, and the courage, you have all the compassion, the reason, and the reflection of one who never read a romance. Can we ever hope you will make a figure, when you only fight because it was right you should, and not because you hated the French, or loved destroying mankind? This is so un-English, so un-heroic, that I despair of you!"

Of the person in which this lofty, yet "tender and kindly" soul was appropriately enshrined, Walpole gives, in a supposed fragment of romance, the following description: "Elmedorus was tall and perfectly well made, his face oval, his features regularly handsome, but not effeminate; his complexion sentimentally brown, with not much colour; his teeth fine, and forehead agreeably low, round which his black hair curled naturally and beautifully. His eyes were black too, but had nothing fierce or insolent, on the contrary, a certain melancholy swimmingness, that described hopeless love,

was certainly the most distinguished. He never ceased to attest his attachment to virtue at the risk of a most precarious fortune; and he had one merit that added to the beauty of his character, and in which he was singular, that he never mixed party or faction with his line of conduct."

* The battle of Fontenoy, in which Mr. Conway greatly distinguished himself. This vehement wish for peace, characterised through life one who was nevertheless often styled a "born warrior."

rather than a natural amorous languish. His exploits in war have endeared his memory to all admirers of true chivalry, as the mournful elegies which he poured out among the desert rocks of Caledonia,* will ever preserve his name in the flowing annals of poesy."

In 1749 he thus writes:—

"In the church of Chenys, Mr. Conway put on an old helmet we found there. You cannot imagine how it suited him, how antique and handsome he looked; you would have taken him for Rinaldo."

The next extract, in 1755, thus compliments him in the new field of politics, as Irish Secretary:—

"Never make excuses for a letter that tells one as many agreeable things as your last; that you have accommodated all your politics to your satisfaction, and may I be allowed to say, greatly to your credit. What could you tell me that would please me so much? You have tranquillised a nation, have repaired your master's honour, and secured the peace of your administration."

To Mr. Conway's domestic happiness with the Countess of Aylesbury (daughter to the Duke of Argyle, whom he had married in 1748) we have the following, among many agreeable allusions, in a letter to this lady, written in 1760, from the celebrated *Manor of Whichenovre.*

"Well, Madam! If I had known where I was coming, you and Mr. Conway should have come with me. Do you know, this is the individual manor-house where married ladies may have a flitch of bacon upon the easiest terms in the world? I should have expected the owner would be ruined, and that the park would be stocked with hogs instead of deer. On the contrary, it

* Mr. Conway was then (Oct. 1746) in Scotland, where he had accompanied the Duke of Cumberland, as his aide-de-camp. On some love verses he had sent from thence, Walpole makes the remark (characteristic of the temper of the times) that "no Scotchman was capable of such thoughts, though a Scotch *woman* might inspire them."

is thirty years since the flitch was claimed, and Mr. Offley was never so near losing one as when you and Mr. Conway were at Ragley. Are you not ashamed, Madam, never to have put in your claim? I have a great mind to take my oath on your behalf, that neither of you would, if at liberty, prefer anybody else—'*ne fairer, ne fouler,*' and I could easily get twenty persons to swear the same. Therefore, unless you wish to convince the world that your apparent harmony is a counterfeit, you must send me a letter of attorney to claim the flitch in your name. But you had better, if you love a prospect, or bacon, come in person, for you will see a little paradise, the more like the antique one, that (by what I have said) married couples are driven out of it."

The effects of his hero's safety (after one of the battles in Germany in 1761) on the heart not usually *too* sensitive of Walpole, will give an idea of its value to his friends in general.

"I bought the victory by two terrible hours to-day. I heard of the battle two hours before I could hear a word of Mr. Conway. I sent all round the world, and went half round it myself. I have cried and laughed, and trembled and danced. I will now preach at Paul's Cross. In short, I am serious in the height of all my joy. God is very good to you, my dear Madam; I thank him for you, I thank him for myself; it is very unalloyed pleasure we taste at this moment. My heart is so expanded, I could write to the last scrap of my paper; but I won't."

Lest the above, to the hero's wife, should be thought exaggerated, we have this corroboration in a letter to George Montagu:—

"I think few things will make you happier than to hear that we have totally defeated the French combined armies, and that Mr. Conway is *safe*. If this victory produces a peace, I shall be happy for mankind; if not,

I shall content myself with the simple but pure joy of Mr. Conway being safe."

To the disinterestedness of the friend thus highly valued, we have many scattered tributes, but none more heartfelt than the following. On Mr. Pitt accepting the Chatham peerage and a pension, Walpole exclaims, "Oh! my dear Harry, I beg you on my knees, keep your virtue; do let me think there is still upon earth one man who despises money!"

On another occasion, he writes to him:—

"How can one build on virtue and fame both? when do they go together? In my passion I could almost wish you were as worthless and great as the King of Prussia! If conscience is a punishment, is it not a reward too? Go to that silent tribunal, and be satisfied with its sentence."

On his friend's entrance into office in 1765, he thus writes to George Montagu:—

"You will not dislike to hear that Mr. Conway does not take the appointments of Secretary of State.* If it grows the fashion to give up about 4000*l.* a year, this ministry will last for ever."

In June, 1774, General Conway set out, on the frequent and strenuous invitations of Sir R. Murray Keith, on a tour of military observation through Flanders, Germany, Prussia, and part of Hungary. It was from this period that their correspondence (which was, as well as their friendship, of much older standing†) was most closely carried on; nearer intercourse having ripened the warmth of the feelings towards each other of such congenial spirits. One letter alone of Sir R. M. Keith's (to his father) during this period, has been preserved, giving a graphic description of the portion of this

* Having desired (on a former occasion) to hold the Ordnance without the salary, the King told him "he was a phenomenon!"

† They had served together in the Seven Years' War in Germany.

excursion which the friends enjoyed together. Those of General Conway will speak for themselves. One or two of an earlier date, and on a different subject, will complete the picture, which other correspondents of 1773 had drawn, of the naval glories of Britain, as well as exhibit the opinions on society of one so well qualified to adorn it.

GENERAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR, *Park Place, April 12th*, 1773.

One is seldom quite so punctual as one intends: I am not, God knows! and I too often experience the same remissness from my friends; both with regret always—but 'tis the lot of human correspondence, and one must be patient under it.

I am happy in hearing my friend Lord Stormont * is honoured as he ought to be at Vienna; it gives one a good opinion of the Viennois; and in return, I know he found the society he lived in there, very amiable. It was confined, I believe, and from that, much the more agreeable. That of London is much too diffuse; it has grown so very sensibly, in my time,† and now is a folly not confined to the grand, or *beau monde*, but circulates and pervades all orders of people, at least all quarters of the town. I was myself the other night invited to an assembly, very near the *Tower*, where we found two very genteel rooms crammed with card-tables, great caps, and maccaroni heads. In one thing they exceeded us; for, besides tea and lemonade, there was a large proportion of wine and punch constantly offering itself at your elbow, which gave me a high idea of the sociable disposition of the ladies of that quarter.

We are at this moment retired from assemblies of all

* Sir Robert Murray Keith's predecessor in the embassy.

† What would the writer have thought of modern London?

sorts, thank God! and are enjoying, during the short recess of Easter holidays, that kind of society which, of all others, suits my taste the most; which is that of a few intimate and easy friends in the country. The Duke and Duchess of Argyle, Lady Betty, the Fitzroys, and Lord F. Cavendish are now here. Where there is ease and intimacy, there always must be mirth; in short, one's *friends*, so culled and sifted from the mass, seem a different sort of beings, and well they may, when one may taste and relish them distinctly; whereas a London assembly* is a hotch-potch, or pudding of such heterogeneous composition as leaves no distinct flavour of any kind.

You are very good to be mindful of, and to remind me of my scheme for making you a visit at Vienna; and I assure you it is more than possible it may be realised sooner perhaps than you imagine. I know few things that would give me more pleasure than accepting your kind invitation, if I do bring myself to set my foot on the Continent, which I have several temptations to do, and have long meditated. I have heard that the King of Prussia is to have a grand camp some time in June. As you are in the way of hearing this kind of news authentically, will you kindly let me know if anything is fixed.

It is now high time to release you; accept Lady Aylesbury's compliments, and believe me, with sincere regard and esteem,

Your most faithful and affectionate,

H. S. C.

P.S.—I am ashamed to have got through this tedious

* As a contrast to the City assembly above described, we may extract from another letter the postscript relating to a fashionable *réunion* of the same period. "Last night we had a most sumptuous entertainment at the French Ambassador's. There were places at supper for near four hundred people, and all elegantly served. The newest thing was three quadrilles, or parties of four couple each, who danced a new figure dance, well performed. They were not quite in fancy dresses, but *uniform*."

letter without wishing you joy, as I do very sincerely, of the honourable and advantageous promotion of your brother.

In June of the same year he thus wrote, postponing till the following his intended tour:—

Park Place, June 30th, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

I am ashamed of not writing sooner, and almost equally ashamed to write. As to the first, I have all the common excuses of London, and Parliament, and business, and hurry, &c., to allege; but the true reason was, that I was meditating and in doubt about my journey. And now that I must say, alas! that I am *quasi* resolved, I am more ashamed, and more sorry by much; by which you may know what that resolution is. Don't accuse me rashly of fickleness, still less of want of the strongest inclination to execute my scheme, and particularly that part of it which regards *yourself*. But first, Lord Stormont will not be in Paris: we expect him here almost daily; next, my friend Colonel Philipps, who was to have been my companion, has some private business which prevents his going this summer. There are no French reviews, and no Prussian now to be expected; and I could add some personal matters not worth troubling you with. The result of the whole is, that the summer being so far spent, I shall defer with infinite regret the pleasure I had promised myself in seeing you till the next, when I hope nothing may occur to prevent me. I confess it is precarious always, and, therefore, doubly disagreeable to defer a thing one likes, for so many months, perhaps near a year. At a certain time of life, many distant flights are not to be aimed at. I confess I have great pleasure and amusement in them, almost the same as ever; in some respects, perhaps, more, though not exactly of the same kind. Thank God! I shall not run, or rather limp, after Opera girls,

like poor Lord Harrington, in pink and green, nor fly after trinkets and fashions; but the solid pleasure of seeing some banished friends I love, and many countries and things worthy of a manly curiosity, are motives one need not be ashamed of at any age. Hamilton invites and tempts me strongly to push on to Naples; if I could add that to the happiness of visiting yourself and Lord Stormont, my satisfaction would be complete. All this, by an early departure next summer, I might possibly accomplish; however, should the Italian part be more *en l'air*, the other, I hope, will hardly fail. Pray don't *you* think of being in the fashion of leaving your post till next year is past; *then*, indeed, I may think it a very reasonable thing.

I am just come back from the "Voyage de Portsmouth," and with my ears and head so full of great guns, that it has almost driven every other idea out. All the details of that naval campaign you'll have heard so much of, that it would be cruel to persecute you with them; and yet, what else *can* one have to say? It was a noble and a brilliant sight, and a delightful noise and hurry. One could not help a little mischievously regretting that it was all mere show; for, if half the powder had been spent in any thing but salutes, it would probably have procured us half a dozen victories. The weather was delightful, and his Majesty pleased beyond measure. He seemed quite like a little god of the ocean; and no sooner had he enjoyed his fine weather, and the brilliant sun which for two days gilt that moving picture, than he wished for a little agitation, and lo! a squall or two came, *au point nommé!* I am told it gave his Majesty a specimen how monarchs feel when they are *sea-sick;* but I speak by mere hearsay, as it was the last day, and he spent it entirely in his yacht. I might have found some little subject of mortification, that the other element so absorbed all

attention, and depreciated my engineering and poor little *earth*-works for defence of the Docks. His Majesty, indeed, made the tour of them, and seemed very well pleased; but few cared, or knew, or thought anything about them.

The thing was, on the whole, well imagined, and fortunately executed. A king should see his people and be seen by them; a king of a free country, at least, should not be shut up like an eastern monarch. The scene for his first excursion was well chosen; and, now he has tried his wings, I hope and dare say it will not be the last.

Adieu. I have tired you and almost myself. Believe me, with the truest regard,

Your most faithful and affectionate friend,

H. S. C.

The period for realising the interrupted projects of the former year drawing near, General Conway thus acknowledges the timely information communicated to him by Sir Robert Keith.

London, April 25th, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I return you a thousand thanks for your intelligence of the motions of his Imperial Majesty; for you judged perfectly right in supposing him to be a principal object of my curiosity and attention; combined with what he is so much a part of, viz., his troops, and their manœuvres—certainly the first.

The time fixed for his encampments falls out luckily enough for my little projects. The King honours the Blues with his notice this year, and the day at present fixed for the review is the 6th of June. My design is to set out immediately after, and the plan of my journey is through Flanders, where I propose to see some of the French garrisons, the Austrian, as far as they lie cleverly

in my way; but as their garrisons are thin, and I hope to see so much of their troops in another situation, I am more indifferent to that.

From Flanders, I shall go of course to pay my devoirs to our old commander, and much honoured friend, Duke Ferdinand.* This is the outline of my plan, to be filled up by such occasional excursions as the incitement of particular objects may occasion. I should like to aim both at Berlin and Saxony, if within my reach. I have heard, within this day or two, that the King of Prussia will have his grand reviews in May; if so, I doubt I must give them up, though with great regret; and in that case content myself with peeping at his person and town, which I have never seen.

Whatever advice and assistance you, who are such a citizen of the world, can give to such a *poor young traveller*, will be thankfully received; and what objects *you* point out as worthy of admiration or curiosity, will be carefully attended to.

In the meantime, I feel as I ought, the kindness of your friendly invitation. I know no sight equal to the countenance of a cordial friend. In having any way contributed to your being in the situation you hold, I have served his Majesty and the public. But, indeed, you *placed yourself where you are*. 'Tis little to put a man upon the stage if he does not know how to act there; and my small share in it is amply paid by any part in a friendship which I esteem so valuable.

Have you got Lord Chesterfield's Letters yet? Probably not, as they are very voluminous. They make some noise here, and I think will make some abroad too; especially as some ladies there are spoken pretty freely of, more so indeed than was fit for publication.

* Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, whose appreciation of Sir R. M. Keith and his Highlanders has been already alluded to.

They are a course of letters to his son (your brother minister) for twenty-five years, from his cradle almost to his grave. Their chief purpose and plan to teach him to be a man of the world, *du bon ton*, the Lothario of the age; in which respect his lessons were, I believe, happily thrown away. They are written with a good deal of spirit, and much knowledge of the world, though I think below the pitch he would have aimed at, had he thought of publication. Pray, is not difficulty made in your *territories* about books? even what a traveller carries?

I should have mentioned to you that Lord Stormont was good enough to join us some days of the very few he passed in England. The charms of Paris do not seem to have moved his constancy from Vienna. He talks of it with the same pleasure and regret as the day he first left it. His friends there no doubt deserve his regard, and nothing is so steady as his heart appears in all its affections. They will long retain them, and value them all the more highly.

I beg you to accept of Lady Aylesbury's best compliments, and am, with the greatest truth,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful servant,

H. S. Conway.

The chief incidents of the actual journey may be extracted from various letters, coming as they do from the pen of so able a general, and so celebrated a man.

Arras, June 13th, 1774.

Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I write you a parting word, just to let you know that I am actually under way, and that you have marked my progress in your letter almost as exactly as I could have done myself; (I mean my plan—for you, who know the roads

and country so much better, can in some respects more exactly;) and mine, in effect, is little more than a journey, though a circuitous one, for I shall be always on the wing. Perhaps I might do better to take more time, and see fewer places: but in general the objects of my curiosity are soon seen; and for society, I can't aim at that in this part of my tour. I reserve that for a *bonne bouche* when I shall have the pleasure of yours.

I am arrived, dear Sir, where you see, by Calais, Dunkirk, Mont Cassel, St. Omer, Aire, and Bethune. I propose going to-day to Douai, and thence to Lisle, perhaps by Bouchain and Valenciennes. I shall scarce reach Brunswick till the first days in July, and Berlin the second week, which I hope will allow me to be with you at least the very beginning of August—*sooner if possible.*

I had the pleasure of seeing your father before my departure, and can give you that of saying he seems to me to grow younger.* I know I flatter such a son as you, in telling that news of such a father!

Adieu. I am in expectation of the chief engineer, with whom I propose to see the works, and ground of Turenne's famous attack. I scribble in haste, and am

Your's most truly,

H. S. C.

Brunswick, July 9th, 1774, *5 o'clock, a.m.*

. . . . . I wished to have staid some days longer here, where I have received many flattering marks of civility and attention, and I may, I think, be vain enough to say, of kindness and friendship from my old commander. They expected me to stay longer,

* Spite of which fallacious appearance, Mr. Keith only survived the interview three months.

and I assure you it is a hard struggle with myself to get away; but I now grow doubly impatient. I go from hence to Zell, for I *must see your Queen*, and should have given up that journey with much regret; though I am alarmed with an account that the Emperor's motions will be sooner, and that I may lose the opportunity of seeing him before he sets out, which would be the greatest disappointment. The Duke of Brunswick communicated this to me; but, as the letter was not direct from Vienna, and your account remains uncontradicted, I have some hopes it may be a mistake. I should be glad, if possible, to have a letter from you at Dresden.

I have made such a long one of my doubts and distresses, that I have neither left myself room or time for any account of my journey. In general, it has answered at least up to my expectation, and in one respect beyond it, and surprised me; that is, the state of the fields of battle I have seen, and the great conformity of the ground in its present state with the plans and descriptions.

Dresden, July 21*st*, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

You desire to be informed of my progress, and I have already let you know it, after I was advanced to Brunswick. Potzdam and Berlin turned out, I think, just what you had told me I should find them: the finest, showiest towns I ever saw, by much; but so entirely outside, so unnaturally and artificially fine, and so blended with inside meanness and emptiness, as to give the whole an air of ridicule. When you see fine houses inhabited by fine people, it has an air of grandeur and beauty. When a barber or a shoemaker inhabits a palace, the whole is ridiculous. The singular rage the King has for this manner of building, and the immense sums he spends in it, are among the

miracles of Frederick the Second. His palace, however, is noble as well as wonderful. That he should, besides all these towns, build such a palace after such a war, is a wonder; that he should build it in three years, among his miracles. I think this palace, as I said, very noble: and, though not in the purity of Italian, or even French taste, you, as I remember, undervalue and condemn it too severely.

I staid three days at Potzdam with much entertainment, for good part of which I am obliged to your excellent old friend, Lord Marischal, who showed me all the kindness and civility possible. He stopped me as I passed, and not only made me dine with him that day, but in a manner live with him. He is not at all blind, as you imagined; so much otherwise, that I saw him read a difficult hand I could not easily decipher, without spectacles.

I saw his Prussian Majesty the day after my arrival, and had, as you imagined, a most gracious reception; having been honoured with an audience of near half an hour, which he carried on with an ease and politeness much beyond what I had been taught to expect. I staid but a day at Berlin, that city being, as you said, mere outside. I saw nobody but Monsieur Barnier, and the Austrian and Palatine Ministers, who were extremely polite and attentive; which I owe, I believe, to your letters.

I have experienced the same from Monsieur Millequet, on my arrival here, which is only of to-day. My plan is, at present, to set out on Monday at farthest, if I *can have seen all here* by that time, and I hope to be with you by the 31st. I was in hopes of a letter from you here, but console myself with the thoughts of seeing you so soon, and am, in the mean time,

Most sincerely yours,

H. S. C.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

Vienna, September 3rd, 1774.

DEAR FATHER,

I sit down to give you some account of our Hungarian expedition, which, by the fineness of the weather, the hospitality of the inhabitants, the beauty of the country, and the variety of curious objects, turned out highly to Mr. Conway's satisfaction and mine. After seeing the castle of Presburg (which, since your time, is greatly enlarged, as well as elegantly furnished), we went to Landschutz, a seat belonging to your old friend Quinquin, now Chancellor of Hungary. The situation is extremely pretty, and no English garden was ever better gravelled or better kept than this one. He offered to go thither himself to do the honours, but as I had protested against that trouble, his servants received us with every possible attention, and we saw a very handsome house, and a mighty pleasant place, as our evening's amusement. We afterwards slept at Tirnau, and next day we quitted the post-road, and were served by peasants' horses as far as Schemnitz. I should tell you, that by an order given in the country we were to traverse, the viscounts and magistrates of the districts were directed to give us every sort of assistance, which indeed they did with a readiness and cordiality which had a kinder principle than that of obedience.

At Schemnitz, the director-general of the mines received us as he would have done a prince of the blood, carried us every where himself, explained everything, fed us sumptuously, and made us as well acquainted with the bowels of the earth in ten hours, as other people have been in as many months. The mines have nothing either dangerous or disagreeable in their access, and we passed a considerable time in examining the

work which is actually carrying on in the great mine, one level gallery of which is ten thousand toises in length, and pierces the great hill from one side to the other.

We saw all sorts of engines, and all sorts of ores. Mr. Conway's wish of going down eleven hundred toises in a leathern bucket * was indulged without the least inconvenience or risk; and I should have followed his example by the same conveyance, if the time had permitted. We saw all the different kinds of stone which contain the metals carried through all the various processes of pounding, melting, separating, and refining, and within an inch of the coining; but that concluding operation was reserved for the mint of Cremnitz, whither we went next day, through a most delightful and romantic country.

At Cremnitz they had prepared three furnaces, and we saw the same processes upon the great scale which had been shown us the day before in miniature; and we afterwards coined our bits of gold into the actual and sterling stamp of Cremnitz ducats. With a great deal of curiosity, and an equal share of activity, I may say that we *explored everything*, and that everywhere we found our pains amply repaid by pleasure and instruction. We returned to Schemnitz through a chain of wild and woody hills, where every step produced a new and striking landscape. The rivulets which water the narrow vallies at the bottom, carry down from the heights no inconsiderable quantity of gold dust, and several thousand people (with the assistance of pounding mills, and many other curious machines) are employed

* In allusion to this, Walpole writes to Conway, "I did not think you so like the rest of the world as to go in search of gold and silver mines. The favour of Courts and smiles of Emperors have corrupted even you, and perverted you to a nabob. Have you brought away an ingot in the calf of your leg? What abomination have you committed?"

in washing the mud and powdered stones, to extract that precious metal.

The town of Schemnitz is a fine scrambling sort of a place, which seems to have been scattered by a mixture of taste and chance, along the sides of several hills. The inhabitants are Hungarians, Germans, Slavi, Vandals, &c., and their number, in that parish alone, amounts to twenty-seven thousand. We took our leave next day of our hospitable miners, and after passing through some inferior gold-finding habitations, we got again into the wide plains of Hungary; and were again accompanied by the gentlemen of the country, who loaded us (and gratis, too, in spite of all our endeavours,) with meat, fruit, wine, and kindness, even to the utmost extent of their territory, at the ancient city of Gran. There we got once more into the post-road, and reached the camp at Pesth next day, where his Imperial Majesty arrived a few hours after us.

The corps of troops we saw manœuvre were in excellent order, and complete discipline, and consisted of ten regiments of cavalry, and eleven battalions of Hungarian infantry. The distinguished condescension with which the Emperor was pleased to receive us, the kindness which we experienced during our stay from Duke Albert of Saxony, the Prince of Mecklenburgh, the Generals Lacy, Laudohn, &c., were far beyond what we had any right to expect; and this military part of our journey was to the full as satisfactory in every point as the former had been.

You know that the town of Pesth, and the ancient capital Buda, stand upon the two opposite banks of the Danube. In the latter of the two cities (the situation of which is truly noble) there are many curious remains of the Turkish religion and manners, as they were in possession of it for almost two centuries, and did not lose it till the year 1686. This present Empress has

built a very handsome palace, upon the hill which commands the river and both cities. The country from hence, lower down into Hungary, is a wide expanse of plain for hundreds of miles, and neither very rich nor populous.

After four days' stay at the camp, I returned to Vienna, by Raab, Comorrn, &c., and Mr. Conway joined me by appointment, on the Friday following, at Presburg, to see the famous automaton, which (as you may have read in every newspaper of Europe) plays at chess without the help of any visible agent, without any persons being concealed *in* or *near it*,* and with all the variety of complex motions which that game comprehends in playing the pieces, removing them, &c., &c. The automaton beat Mr. Conway one game, and was beat the second, in the presence of fourteen others of our countrymen, whose curiosity had brought them from Vienna to meet us. There is no telling you how strange a thing this automaton is, nor how very perfect in all its operations. If the loadstone be the principle of its movements, it is at least so well concealed that there is no guessing at the secret; and I am assured that magnets, and bars of iron, have been brought on purpose to counteract its motions, without having produced that effect. It is a gentleman of the name of Kempeln, who invented this machine to amuse the Empress, and to outdo Monsieur Pelletier, the disciple of Comus; and I have never met with any body who pretended to explain this invisible agency. The automaton had been dismounted for some years, because, I suppose, it took up too much of the gentleman's time; but he put it in order at my particular request, and showed it with great good humour, and without the least charlatanerie. He

* After mystifying all Europe for half a century, it has recently been ascertained that a concealed agent was in the machine, passing from compartment to compartment, as the interior was ostensibly shown.

says, that whenever he has leisure, he will undertake something of machinery still more extraordinary.*

Mr. Conway staid but one day at Vienna, and then set out, post-haste, for the Prussian camp at Breslaw, from whence he goes to the Imperial camp at Prague, and is to meet me about the 20th of this month, at Austerlitz, in Moravia, near which place there is likewise to be an encampment. We shall return together to Vienna, and there he will bid us adieu, and set out by Munich and Strasbourg for Paris. I hope that he will carry home many agreeable recollections from hence, as well as many proofs of that affectionate gratitude which I owe to him.

And now, dear Sir, I fancy you are almost tired of this rambling journal, which has carried me almost to the end of my immense folio, without any mention of your numerous friends here, whose inquiries after you are at all times equally affectionate. Every body you love is in perfect health. Your presents have been received, and delivered to Prince Kaunitz, and he seemed much pleased both with the presents, and the remembrance of the donor. I have only room to assure you, dear Sir, of my warmest duty and affection, and to offer love to the Hermits, and all friends.

R. M. K.

After the separation above alluded to, and which both friends had expected to be temporary, Mr. Conway thus writes:—

Prague, 11th September.

Dear Sir Robert,

I return you a thousand thanks for your letter and intelligence; though, as it lessens, I doubt, my prospect of seeing you so soon as I always wish, I find it hard to be equally obliged. I have taken no final

* The celebrated piano-forte playing automaton.

resolution upon the subject, because I have not the courage to say to myself, "I will not go to see you and my friends at Vienna when it is in my power." Yet, on the other side, I say, "Why go to Vienna only to take leave, and add to the regret I always feel in parting with people in whose company I had so much pleasure?" Could I stay any tolerably comfortable time, I would fly to you. . . . I got in time to my Breslaw camp through all impediments, but barely so, and as it were, to a moment. I was five nights out of the last six, from Pesth, without going to bed; having only tasted repose a few hours in the charming green bed; but that was little. I expected the camp at Breslaw, having never heard of any other name.

But behold! when I came there, I was told it was four German miles off, at a place called Schmelwitz; that the King had left Breslaw, was gone there, and would probably begin his manœuvres the next morning, at four or five.

It was now evening; I found out your friend, Count Zinzendorff, who confirmed it all; it was at that very place, a small village, the quarters in it all probably taken up, and not the *idea* of a public-house! Here was I, then, without quarters, without horses, not knowing whom I was to find, or how I should be introduced. However, there was but one way, which was to go on; so I got hacks to ride, ordered my chaise, and at twelve at night (a very bad and dark one) issued forth in quest of a camp, twenty miles off, I hardly knew where.

At Schmelwitz, however, we arrived, most punctually, before five. But instead of a camp, or head-quarter, and the King directing his manœuvres, found ourselves in the midst of a little dirty village, empty, dead, no soul stirring, no guard, no sentinel, no appearance of a head-quarter, not the idea of a camp; all seemed

vanished like a vision. As soon as a living thing was found, we asked if that was Schmelwitz, the King's head-quarter? "Yes." "Where he lodged?" They pointed to a farm-yard. "Where was General Lentulus?" They showed a little mud-walled cottage close by us. In short, we found General Lentulus, and in a moment the enchantment, and with it all our distresses, vanished. He received me exactly as I could have wished; I was in such a sumptuous quarter as his own in five minutes. The King expected me, and had mentioned me several times. He was to see the troops march into camp that morning, but not till eight o'clock. At eight he came out, saw all his troops march in for three hours in a constant heavy rain, without a great-coat, his attendants all the same, and we dripped too in complaisance; and what was worse, after being wet as drowned rats, we went to attend his general orders, and levee, for an hour and a half, *as we were*, yet nobody a bit the worse; which shows that these silly, crazy *corps* of our's, when put to it, can bear a great deal when they please; though at other times a breath of wind will give one the rheumatism. We are, however, lucky creatures, and in my particular, during this long course, extraordinarily so, for I have hardly met with another bad day when I wished for fair weather; and this one day past, the rest, during the camp, were as fine as possible, which, besides the sensible *agrément*, added a spirit and lustre to all our shows and operations, which were indeed amazingly fine, and more than answered my expectations.

Of the three succeeding days, the first was a day of review, and general exercise of the whole army; the cavalry performing several evolutions and charges, and the infantry the same in line, marching, firing, &c. Next day the army divided, and the King, with the main part, attacked a supposed van-guard of a superior

army, in a village; first carried the village, but the enemy bringing succours, he retired, and was attacked in the rear. The last day was the attack of an army advantageously posted, on *one flank;* an action much resembling that of Lissa. On both occasions, General Anhalt commanded the enemy's forces, and really managed them, as appeared to me, with great spirit and intelligence. The troops kept an excellent order, and on the whole, the show to strangers was very striking. The moment it was over, his Majesty departed for Breslaw.

And now you'll think my story imperfectly told, if I don't let you know how his Majesty received me; on which, knowing the kind part you take in all that concerns me, I have a double pleasure in saying that it was exceedingly gracious indeed. He spoke to me every day a great deal; and, what made it more flattering and distinguished, I think I may literally say his three levees running, to *me alone,* and a great while, though several strangers of distinction were present.

The Prince Royal was also particularly civil to me; and, what was doubly flattering, told me his Majesty had a high opinion of me; which he said arose chiefly from the advantageous manner in which the Hereditary Prince and Duke Ferdinand had spoken of me. His Royal Highness made me come two evenings, and pass an hour or two at his quarters *tête-à-tête.* The first, was to drink tea; the last, he gave me a little cold supper. His manner was extremely natural, and, I thought, showed both good sense and good nature, and a knowledge of many things and people in our country which surprised me. Now there's the history of all my vanities; a considerable branch of every man's history who speaks out as I do, because I know you have goodness not only not to condemn, but even to share them.

I am ashamed of the unmerciful volume I have written; yet a few last words and I release you. From camp I came to Breslaw, to see the town, field of battle, &c., and from thence, next day took my departure for the tour you know I meditated in Silesia, which was by Lignitz, Landshut, and Schweidnitz, Reichenbach, Silverberg, and Glatz, all sacred ground for a military foot; and in the course of it saw many scenes very interesting and extraordinary. The King has made great additions to Schweidnitz, and fortified Silverberg and Glatz at vast expense. These, added to the enormous cost of his new palace, and the building and rebuilding towns after so long and consumptive a war, are among the wonders of his reign.

Soon after I left Landshut I had an accident, which to some travellers would have appeared serious, viz., the sudden loss of my chaise and baggage; for in a moment one of those wheels I had certainly thought eternal, broke to pieces, and planted us in the middle of the road. However, not much dismayed, we got it down to the first village, and leaving it there under the care of Philippo, took a carriole at the village, packed up a couple of shirts, a book, and a map or two, and pursued our journey *comme si de rien n'était!* One day passed and no Philippo, no chaise; another, and still the same. I now despaired of seeing them before I returned to Prague, but resolved to proceed; my linen was exhausted; my breeches in holes, and (saving your presence) almost falling off. I tried to buy another pair, but in vain; and all my hopes lay in a thorough repair at Prague, when at last, just as we were departing from Glatz, in came Philippo and the chaise; in appearance vigorous and fresh as ever, and has carried us over the mountains most successfully, in trying roads I assure you!

H. S. C.

Prague, Sept. 14th, before 6 a.m.

I HOPE by this time you have got my packet from hence. The Emperor came yesterday to dinner, and *he* tells me you are coming to the camp at Brünn, while *you* say you can't stir from Vienna. The thought of not seeing you again pains me infinitely; yet my reasoning was too good. Your exceeding friendship and kindness add to the distress of the moment, which I feel heavily. I thought, when I meditated and executed my visit to you, it would be *all pleasure*, and so it was while it lasted; but so, alas! it is, in this best of all worlds, that there is no such thing as a pleasure that has not a *sting in its tail.*

The destination of my baggage must now be as we had settled—my trunks to Nuremberg, the rest to England —music, china, pictures—our charming Emperor's picture, I must beg, may not be forgot; and pray make up my accompt faithfully, and let me pay you all I owe you. I mean all that debt which I *can* acquit. The debt of all your goodness, civility, friendship, and kind attention, for that I must own myself insolvent. I know what you are ready to say upon that, but I stick to my text!

Pray tell our good and adorable Countesses,* all that I have said on this subject is also for them. I am grieved to hear Madame de Thun has been indisposed—she is too good to be a moment so. Actually there are a certain species upon this earth (but they are rare) who seem made to be inhabitants of some much better sphere than this miserable scene of diseases, weakness, and calamity. It makes cynics of us, to see such people suffer.

I could fill pages with my regrets at not returning among you; but not only grave and sound reasons

* Mesdames de Thun and Pergen, the intimate friends of Sir R. M. Keith; the most amiable, as well as distinguished women in Austria.

(generally the most odious counsellors in the world), but even my friendship for you itself, and my partiality for Vienna, warned me against so unsatisfactory a visit. Do not hesitate to believe this the very *inside of my heart* upon this occasion, and convey it to all who are the objects of that regret; that is, to all who were my friends because they were *yours*.

Adieu, and believe me ever dear Sir Robert's

Most affectionate and faithful servant,

H. S. C.

I believe I forgot to tell you that the King of Prussia honoured you with his compliments—what an omission!

The reader who has thus far accompanied, in his tour over the battle-fields and camps of Europe, the future Commander-in-Chief of England, as well as prominent sharer in her various administrations, will not be sorry to conclude it with his opinions on the state both of military and civil affairs in France, at a period when the events, to which subsequent experience has traced the springs of its revolution, were beginning to excite observation; though none save a prophet, perhaps, could have discerned in "the cloud as yet no bigger than a man's hand"—the fury of the coming storm.

Paris, Nov. 19th, 1774.

I HAVE just read over your letter, my dear Sir, with that mixed kind of feeling which accompanies so many of our affairs *ici bas*—pleasure and pain; pleasure to behold you in that picture of your mind, full of friendship and goodness; and pain for my own shocking negligence in letting so much kindness be so long unacknowledged. I had a little glimmering of hope that I had written to you since my arrival here, but fear it is a flattering illusion, arising from self-love and vanity, and wishes to be what I ought; and I doubt I

must not take credit for any such letter, but only content myself with wishing that it had been so.

I am infinitely obliged to you, I am infinitely so to my friends, and yours who think of me at Vienna. There is no place where I had rather be thought of; your friends are such as you have reason to be as proud of as they are of you, and I am of both; wherefore I desire to keep up the remembrance by which I still exist at Vienna, as long as I can; but, alas! it is the work of short time, and I must expect the fate, I doubt, of those travellers, at best, who are esteemed, well treated, and at last forgotten in the crowd, by their kind hosts.

From Nuremberg, my history is rather simple and unadventurous I executed the plan I had always had in my mind for visiting the fields of action at Donawert and Blenheim. We had no military guides, but yet saw them satisfactorily. There are few *memories living* for those scenes, much less persons. But the ground and the descriptions suffice. I wanted to know a little more distinctly Prince Eugène's march to the ground, and how far his attack extended. And it seems very clear Marshal Tallard's position had a weakness by the centre, where the villages of Oberklaw and Niederklaw (the latter particularly much advanced) were ill protected; and he had unnaturally and unnecessarily crowded Blenheim with a multitude of men.

I was too late for the French reviews, as I expected; but I had an opportunity of seeing Strasbourg, Metz, and Luxembourg the more at my ease; and had all sorts of civilities and facilities from the respective generals and commandants, particularly General Wurmser at Strasbourg, and an old acquaintance, Conflans, at Metz. They are all fine, and very extraordinary places, but I don't mean to trouble you with details upon them. I passed six days at Strasbourg very well. Monsieur de Contades came there, but my chief connection was with

Baron Wurmser, a most polite and amiable man. They showed me the garrison, what remained; only eight battalions, and they reduced to exercise as four by *séméstres et congés.* They are middling corps, and performed in a middling way (not bad, however), the newly introduced Prussian discipline. Major Borche of *Anhalt's* regiment, who was the introducer, was there, with his regiment, for one, so I conclude I saw the flower of it.

I arrived at Paris on the 19th of last month, and found my ladies settled there; but not having succeeded in finding any letters at Metz or Strasbourg, I rather prolonged my stay in that quarter, and, among other good effects of this delay, I had time to see at my ease the ground of the battle of Einsheim, and the curious spot where Monsieur de Turenne was killed; and good part of that country which had been the scene of that memorable and able campaign between him and his rival Montecuculi.

I also staid two or three days at Nanci, the prettiest town in all the world. I saw there the Regiment du Roi, which, for its manœuvres and discipline, was not perhaps very striking, but for its appearance, its ceremony, its parade, beats most I have seen. I saw them out, two battalions, and they treated me with a parade in their fine clothes. I think I never saw a prettier sight of the kind. I fell in with the officers a good deal, which gave me great pleasure, as I found them exceedingly polite. I dined with the Regiment du Roi, that is a large mess of them, joined to the Regiment de *Flandres,* whom they entertained; and afterwards with the Regiment de Champagne in the same manner. At Thionville with a regiment of cavalry. I can't say how much politeness they showed, and you know in the mere military style how agreeable these societies are, when on a good footing; theirs I admired much, as there was

great cheerfulness, with as much order and decency as possible in a numerous company.

Here, I think, may properly end my military history, as it is now time to be in winter quarters. Yet I am not sure if it is quite finished yet, as Marshal Biron has had the goodness to show me the Depôt, or school for the guards, in all its detail, and actually ordered the regiment out one day for me to see them, which was prevented by very bad weather. The major has since told me it was only put off, but the season is so far advanced, and the ground so spoilt, I feel ashamed of giving so much trouble, and cannot think it reasonable to wish for it. We find Paris very amusing. I have made a good many civil, a great many military acquaintances, and among the most respectable, Monsieur de Castries, Stainville, d'Héronville, de Caraman, d'Ennery, (with whom I have just passed two or three days in the country) besides Marshals Biron and Soubise. We are in a very agreeable society, the spectacles are amusing; so that we have not only passed a month with pleasure, but have not as yet fixed the time for our departure. You will be surprised, perhaps, that I am not hurrying to Parliament, but you must know that I have nothing to do with it. The sudden dissolution dislocated and discomposed many election plans. I had imagined the Duke of Grafton, as he said nothing to the contrary, purposed bringing me in as before. However, he was beat at Bury, and also my brother at Coventry; there was no time for new arrangements, so here I am thrown out of that great scene of turbulence. I feel very much consoled and composed, and in my heart not displeased to have a little breathing time, and since I am here, to have an opportunity of taking more than a cursory view of this great, interesting, and curious metropolis.

We have taken a tour to Fontainebleau, and seen the Court. One must see everything; but I assure you one

sees what is called the Court (I mean the Royal Family) here, as one sees the *lions, chez nous*. I had the misfortune to be presented to them all, and, except one word from the Queen (who could not be related to *your* charming Emperor, and not be polite), I was not honoured with one single word from one of the Royal Family. The King receives the presentations with less attention than one should naturally show to a cat or a dog, because he does not even seem to look at you.* I doubt if there is a King of Nègres or a Khan of Tartars so ridiculously uncivil. For us, who know the Emperor and King of Prussia, and who know our own King, who would speak civilly to even a French *captain*, how strange must this appear! I saw, but the night before last, three ladies of fashion presented to a prince of the blood, who did not say one word to them, though a lady of the first distinction carried them. Yet are the people of the Court exceedingly polite; we have received the greatest civilities from them.

What say you to the *lit de justice?* and the actual recall of the old Parliament? They are recalled without new provisions or commissions—*then* the dissolution of the late King was invalid—*then* they are indissoluble—the King seems to tell them so by this recall. Yet the same King tells them, *if they refuse to exercise their functions* they shall be *ipso facto* deprived and dissolved! And he now appoints another body of men to act in their place, whose arrêts and judgments shall be conclusive. He tells them his edicts shall be laws, though they disapprove them; they may remonstrate, but *must obey*. What a constitution!

* It would be difficult to pronounce what share this singular discourtesy (arising in Louis Seize from extreme constitutional shyness) must have had in alienating from the Crown that large portion of the more recent aristocracy, as well as some of an older stamp, which, in the earlier stages of the Revolution, made common cause with the people, and by so doing, increased so materially the difficulties of the Court.

Adieu, my dear chevalier. Accept a budget of compliments from Lady Aylesbury—the Prince of Salms sends his. Yours,

H. S. C.

P. S. I was at this extraordinary *lit de justice*, which was an obligation, owing to great politeness in the Prince de Tingres and the friendly intervention of the Prince de Beauveau; and a great one, as there were but sixty tickets, I believe, for this great hungry town and all strangers. Even our Ambassador had not one; he applied late. The scene was really fine, august, orderly, and solemn beyond expression; and all heightened, as you 'll imagine, by the importance of the occasion. The King spoke well, clearly, distinctly, and with dignity. The proceedings are not yet printed, and I hear will not till Monday, though we have expected them since last Wednesday! Adieu.

Ever cordially yours,

HENRY S. CONWAY.

[*Private.*]

THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR KEITH, *Duke-street, Westminster, Nov. 8th*, 1774.

It seems to be my lot to be the messenger of bad tidings to you.* Another unwelcome occasion calls upon me to perform this office. Poor Bradshaw died suddenly on Sunday last. I can tell you no particulars, being but this instant returned from Hampton Court, where I have passed three or four days, and I have not seen any body that by being able to satisfy my curiosity, can put it in my power to satisfy yours.† Knowing the friendship that existed

* Lord Suffolk had, two months previously, transmitted the tidings to Sir R. M. Keith of his father's death.

† If there was any truth in the asserted mode of Mr. B——'s death,

between you and the poor man who has stolen a march upon us, I would not omit to send you this information, unpleasant as it is.

Ever since I wrote my last private letter to you, I have been constantly indisposed, more or less, with my inveterate complaint. Whenever I think I am getting a little better, more gout unexpectedly appears, and I am thrown back again. However, I am still heart-whole, and it is not bodily pain will make me otherwise.

My dear Keith, I am

Most faithfully yours,

SUFFOLK.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.*

Vienna, Dec. 17th, 1774.

THERE is no balm in this world equal to that of kindness poured upon the wounds of an afflicted mind; and I solemnly assure you, my dear Chamier, that in the receipt of your friendly letter of the 24th Nov., I made a very happy trial of its efficacy. My worthy Brad was to me a treasure of cordiality, a trusty pillar of my life, upon which I leant my little cares, without scruple, and in full security. I thought myself able to render him reciprocal service in the same manner. I was proud to believe that I carried in my own breast the antidote to a very considerable part of those grievances which had beset him; I had fifty plans for the future improvement of that ascendancy which I had acquired over his heart, and all were turned to establish, in the evening of his life, and to share with him that con-

the delicacy of this, and other communications from England, left Sir R. M. K. long in ignorance of its nature; as appears from an allusion he was incapable of making, under the circumstances, to *suicide*, in a letter to his brother.

* Anthony Chamier, Esq., Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, and brother-in-law to the late Mr. Bradshaw.

contentment and tranquillity, which his own principles and his own feelings gave him so good a right to enjoy. I forgot that at the distance of a thousand miles, the consolations of friendship are not applied to the incident and the moment, and consequently lose one half of their force and value. He has ceased to suffer, but I shall never cease to remember that in a long and intimate acquaintance, I never found him short of my highest demands, in warmth of heart, in truth, or in the most active friendship. My hearty blessing is written upon the stone which covers his ashes, and if ever a child of his can receive a pleasure or service from my best efforts, I need not say to what extent they may command them.

After two such losses* as those I have lately sustained, you will not be surprised, my dear Chamier, when I tell you that I felt myself in some measure forlorn, and that I rather hugged my grief than endeavoured to alleviate it. But, I thank God, I have friends who lead my heart, and lead it to its good. My family, my generous friend Lord Suffolk, and my indefatigable Drummonds, have lifted me up from the depression occasioned by the death of my worthy father. You, my dear Chamier, have rendered me the same service after the loss of my poor friend.

Are you able, are you heartily disposed to undertake with me an intimate, unreserved, unstudied correspondence for fifty years to come? You will do me a service beyond all price; and you, too, in a length of time, will think yourself no loser by it. You shall tell me all your rubs, and all your pleasant feelings; you shall have the best return I can make in sterling nonsense, which is my staple commodity.

In short, will you take me for better for worse, and

* Sir R. M. Keith's father had died three months previously.

let me scold you when you are idle? If so, here goes, and this sheet of paper is the first of endless volumes. Well! what say you, is it a bargain? If you answer this letter, you must scribble on to all eternity; and about what? asks your letter now before me. Why, Master Chamier, I love to know everything. You have the wide world before you. You are already persecuted by pen and ink; you have forty thousand discontented men with red coats upon their backs, who wear out your very heart-strings; and, to be sure, your embracing an epistolary obligation with me, is entailing upon yourself an additional torment. But there is a pleasure in the variety of pain; and one thing I can assure you, which is, that the letters you receive from me shall not resemble anything you receive in black and white from any other corner of the globe; that they shall never turn upon any point of your own tedious business; shall never contain on my part the shadow of a grievance, and your answers to them may be without common sense or connexion, provided they are kind and affectionate. This, I think, makes all easy; so, as I told you before, here goes No. 1 of our joint lucubrations. I shall have no cares very soon, for I shall be without a shilling of worldly substance, and, consequently, I shall become a choice correspondent.

I am hurt to death about America; and yet I think there is such a store of honest principle and sound common sense on both sides the Atlantic, that there is no room to dread a deep and rancorous quarrel. One favourable turn, one circumstance of sterling value, and happily improved, may give a favourable bias to the whole of these transactions. I look greedily for the man and the moment, but I am too little informed to know whereabouts I *ought* to look for them. You shall be my *Cicerone* in America; and in return, if you ever should be singular enough to wish to see daylight into

the obscure arcana of the Holy Roman Empire, I will carefully anatomise the whole of that rotten carcase for your inspection. One of the principal members of that body has engaged my ministerial officers to decide—a question at Whist! You have it here, enclosed upon a scrap of paper. Tell Dick Cox to get it *instantly* decided by the White's Club rules, and to put that decision in *five words* upon the back of the paper which you will send back to me. You see, my dear Chamier, in how many shapes the deep and active talents of a politician by profession are employed! How thrive your Austrian garden-seeds? Will you have any more of them? I am the bosom friend of the professor of botany, and we will rob the state to serve you. Adieu, my Chamier; my love to the *Gang*. I would give a thousand acres of my land, in Tweeddale, to pass one year among you.

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, Jan. 21*st*, 1775.

I WOULD at this very moment give fifty pistoles for two sheets of common sense in regard to the history of John Bull and his refractory offspring in America. I am bewildered in Mr. Woodfall's lame narration, and obscure conjectures. I see rocks on all sides, and have not a glimpse of a pilot to guide me into port. You, my Chamier, shall have that office, for I am fully persuaded that the voyage must end to the advantage of all parties, though I cannot see a finger before me till the present mist is cleared up.

There is not a man of sense in Europe who does not think that the question now in agitation between Great Britain and her colonies, is one of the most important, as well as most singular, that have been canvassed for

many centuries; but you would laugh to see how few people have any tolerable notion of that civil liberty, the bounds of which are now to be defined between mother and daughter, for the good of the whole family. The constitution of England, and the sacred energy of her laws, is, indeed, the only subject which not one foreigner amongst ten millions can comprehend with any tolerable degree of precision. I do not give lectures upon the subject, as you may well believe, my dear Chamier; but I can't help fretting now and then, when I hear a hundred decisive voices run away with a question, the very first principle of which is to them Greek and Hebrew. I hope that in a few months the firm and manly conduct of our government will produce such extensive and salutary effects, as may convince all mankind that the authority of wholesome laws is the very essence of public liberty.

January 28th.

I came to an anchor last week in the midst of this sheet, in hopes of a fresh breeze of intelligence from the best of possible islands, and yesterday brought it me in the shape of your kind and welcome epistle. Ten thousand thanks to you, my dear Chamier, for the cordial ratification of that Treaty, by which I am to be so great a gainer through life, and in the very manner that best suits my disposition and wishes. The picture you draw of my friend Anthony* is a striking likeness, though not a flattering one. I know the features of his inside much better than you imagine, and it is ten years ago that I knew him to be a man according to my own heart.

I deplore the situation of my poor Brad's family, and my only comfort, as well as their's, amid the shipwreck of their fortunes is, that they are under the guidance of

* Mr. Chamier himself.

your truth and warm-heartedness. I feel for the distress in which it involves you; but the occasions of doing essential service to honest people are very rare; and I mistake you much, my dear Chamier, if ten years hence I do not find you in possession of a stock of recollections relative to the Bradshaw family, which both you and I shall look upon as a treasure. I am so much a stranger to the London world, that I cannot venture a word of advice concerning the eldest boy; but if you shall determine to send him to Scotland, you may command every sort of assistance I can procure him there. I would give a finger of my right hand to be able to say to myself that I had contributed to make an useful man of Bradshaw's boy. I will take up the subject with you as often as you please, and set my hand to work as heartily as you can wish.

In the last sentence of the last letter I ever had from honest Brad, he desired me to share his satisfaction at your recent inheritance. I applaud the application of it, and am clearly of opinion, that the best way to show our gratitude for the favours of Providence, or the bequests of friendship, is to draw from them every harmless species of cheerful enjoyment. Go on, therefore, my dear Cham, cut all your rooms and your domains into the precise shape that best suits your fancy; and fit me up a little snug room, with blue and white paper, and a hard bed, in one corner of your mansion. Let me alone for taking possession of it, sooner than you *think* of. Hang Lord John Murray! He may live fifty years for me, provided I am not obliged to pass two hours of them in his company. I have not a promise, or the wish for a promise of his military succession. I would not thank any man for giving me a regiment, whilst any honest fellow, my senior in service, is unprovided; and if my friends will engage to live as long as I do, they shall never hear

me repine. Peter Taylor said my father wanted parts, and he certainly did so, if forgetting to make his sons greedy or ambitious be an unpardonable weakness. I am going to sell my thousand acres in Tweeddale, and when I am once out of debt, you shall see what a pleasant light-hearted fellow your Sir Robert shall be. But there's no being either on this side the Channel. I must get a holiday, and come amongst you for a few months to be entirely myself. The little anecdote about Lord Suffolk is to me highly flattering, and I am happy to tell *you* (once for all), that his Lordship, from the first moment of our starting in the same career, has acted towards me a part in which candour, benevolence, truth, and disinterested friendship, have so equally furnished their *quota*, that I find it hard to say whether I am more beholden to him as a man or a minister. I do not exaggerate in praising Lord Suffolk, for I speak of a heart in which I hold a place, and which never gave pain when it could with justice create a pleasure. Whenever my ragged fortunes stare me in the face, I think of my proud list of friends, and smile at poverty.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, Feb. 5th, 1775.

I HAVE already that sort of impatient hankering for your handwriting which I used to have after that of my poor friend, and that, let me tell you, my dear Cham, is no indifferent proof of the cordiality I have promised you. I think next post will bring me a handsome sheet of daylight into American matters, which to me are hitherto all *mirk* and mystery. I am out of all patience with the six hundred congresses of as many ragged American villages, and I long to hear old mother

England hold to them the language of affectionate authority and dignified firmness. I would not hurt a hair of their crazy heads, if I could help it; but I would enforce the laws with temper and moderation, in order to impress upon their memories this first salutary lesson of filial obedience. I tell you, Master Chamier, that I never despair, and I persist in affirming, that if ten good heads or warm hearts on your side the water, set about this business with steadiness and perseverance, they may succeed in spite of clamour, faction, and peevishness, wherever they may have taken root. What! would you have me to believe that John Bull is blind enough not to see the strait and fair line of his best interests, or weak enough to be wheedled or bullied out of those rights which God and common sense have bestowed upon him? I will not, and I cannot harbour such an idea! You laugh at what you call my fond expectations of the result of sound common sense on both sides the Atlantic. Why, my dear Chamier, the very occurrences of the House depose in my favour! You in England have taken the step I ventured to recommend in the first page of this epistle; and from all I hear of American matters, methinks you are in the right road. There is an old French author, the Duc de Rohan, who writes about the principles of government, and says of that of England, "*La constitution de l'Angleterre est une grande Bête, qui ne saurait mourir si elle ne se tue pas elle-même.*" Now that is precisely what I could have said in six sheets of paper, and not more clearly. England will not be *felo de se* this bout. I trust in Providence, and in the manly principles of Lord North, Lord Suffolk, and half a dozen more of those sound politicians who have a fair and just preponderance in the management of that constitution. If I hear of a *half measure* in the next six months, I shall be sorry for it; if I could hear of a *cruel one* I should be still more so. But there is at

bottom in John Bull and all his children, an innate principle of humanity, which no other nation under the sun can boast of. John Bull can quarrel and box with his own brother, and give or take a black eye with every exertion of his hot-headedness; but to shake hands and be friends again, without the smallest remnant of rancour, is a species of benevolence which, as far as I know, belongs to John exclusively, and I love him for it most cordially. Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, March 3rd, 1775.

THERE is, indeed, a noble ardour in the exertions of your friendship, but it is what I expected, my dear Chamier, and the pleasure of surprise is the only one which I firmly believe and hope I shall never once owe to you through life. When a man says to his friend, "Sir, I am struck dumb by the accumulation of your kindnesses," he means to say, "Sir, you are a much honester and more warm-hearted fellow than I took you to be;" and, between you and I, the compliment is but a sorry one. Now, Master Anthony, I tell you that you may run me fifty letters into your debt (though I have no such intention), and you may lay twice as many essential obligations upon my shoulders, and yet I shall sit very easy under them, without either disgust or astonishment, hugging myself on the conviction of my conscience, that when my turn comes to do kind offices, you shall see that I am both as zealous and as active as yourself. Poursuivez donc, mon brave Chamier, donnez moi vos manifestes d'Amérique, et je vous enverrai en revanche, des bulletins de Paris. Le Roi Français a tranché net le progrès des echasses, et l'etablissement des manteaux, et haut de chausses, à sa cour; par la déclaration à son léver, que le Mardi Gras serait l'epoque

decisive de leur suppression. Voila une grande affaire, sur laquelle il n'y a plus de fausses conjectures à faire! J'en dirais volontiers autant de vos combustions Américaines; quoique je sois bien loin de les mettre en balance avec la destinée de *toutes les modes de l'Europe.*

Now for some politics in plain English. I can't help thinking that you see the American affairs in too black a light. I have my little private information, but all I gather serves to enforce my belief, that the moment of your downright decision as to measures, was the very happy crisis of the fate of the mother country and her children. Ricketty, peevish, and obstreperous brats there are amongst that offspring, that is most certain; but how the devil did you suppose that the honest, well-disposed children in the nursery should show their faces in support of the parental authority, while you, the father, left it a doubtful point, whether you would apply the rod of wholesome chastisement to the breech of a forward stripling, or pull down your own trowsers, and request Master to perform the same office towards yourself. I may be too sanguine; but if the late measures, *properly executed,* be not as effectual, as I know them to be well founded, I will throw my political pen to the dogs, and write romances for the circulating library.*

I like the augmentation plan contained in your last very well; but I have no conception of that insipid immortality which your hundred of old proprietors of

* It may seem to many of our day (with the result of the conflict full in view) inconsistent with the acknowledged political sagacity of Sir R. M. Keith, to have looked forward with such confidence to its widely-differing issue. But even had the opinion not been shared with many of the greatest and wisest of his time, who could wonder that a veteran of the Seven Years' War, who had there learned how Britons could fight when ably led to victory, against the "chosen troops of France," should anticipate a similar triumph to his country's arms, when her whole energies were about to be exerted against undisciplined levies of what all (save themselves) were still agreed in denominating "rebels!"

regiments have enjoyed for a year or two past. There are at least a score of them who have been long dead in law to every purpose of comfort or utility; and if Doctor Dominicetti has bathed these old Fogrums into youth again, he has done the worst service he possibly could to the art military. Not that I care a button, Squire Chamier. I have the King's bread to eat till these gentlemen shall petition for Christian burial; but I am sorry for all my *eight-and-sixpenny brethren* of long standing, who have nothing but merit and the bare eight-and-sixpence. I had a regiment sixteen years ago; and I think in about sixteen more I shall get another—so that you see I am half way between my old and new corps. But all this is to me a matter of joke, for I repeat to you that I hate injustice, and shall never countenance it, in the case of Sir Robert, or Sir anybody else. Basta! I must bore my good Lord Suffolk for half an hour, and then I return to your worship. Good bye to you in the meantime.

March 4th.

Do you know, my friend, that I am laying the corner-stone of such a castle in the air, as will lodge you and all my intimates most comfortably: aye, and speedily too, if no untoward accident overthrows my scaffolding.

I hope in about two months hence, to—to employ in person the labours of your corkscrew, instead of those of your pen; and to take possession of that same blue and white room at Epsom, which I mentioned to you in my last. But *mum* is the word, till I have heard once more from Cleveland Row, and satisfied my own internal monitor that the self-indulgence of such a trip can in no shape turn to the detriment of the King's service. I both respect my public duties, and love them; and though no man can have a better plea than mine for obtaining a short vacation, I shall never think of self till my betters are served. If my castle stands, as I

hope it will, remember that after divesting myself most cheerfully of all my terrestrial property, after doing justice to my family, and to my excellent Drummonds, I will think of nothing but pleasure; and the man who shall dare to treat me as a politician, is my worst of foes, and shall be dealt with as such. If I have any parts, (a point about which I am as *dubus* as Peter Taylor,) I am determined to leave them all at Vienna; and to carry nothing to Epsom but the "light heart, and the" *no* "pair of breeches," which descend to me from my Highland ancestors! Whisper to the *Gang* my intentions, and if any friend asks you what the deuce I can have to do in England, tell him that I have been for three years distressed, in the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, with a famine of nonsense; which I fly to make up for in the company of a dozen of the most harmless fellows in the county of Middlesex.

The purpose is an honest one, and I wish I may be hanged if I have any other in the journey. We will go to Hampton,* my Chamier, and to Mistley,† and to Euston,‡ and to Coombank,§ and we will perform wonders of merriment everywhere. And therefore I must insist upon your laying down your employment, unless Lord Barrington will promise that you shall never be required to think or write one quarter of an hour about business, during my six months intended stay in England. Lord Barrington ‖ will see the necessity of this indulgence; for he is too reasonable to suppose that I can spare you from my pleasures, to sign the mandates for his *bloody massacres*. We will call upon his lordship too at Beckett,¶ if he behaves handsomely; and I will tell him, over a bottle of claret,

* Lord Suffolk's.
† Mr. Rigby's.
‡ Duke of Grafton's.
§ Lord Frederick Campbell's.
‖ The War Secretary, Mr. Chamier's principal.
¶ His lordship's seat.

how we Germans have brought the art of manslaughter to a wonderful degree of perfection, by the simple virtues of a *crab-stick*. Yet still I tell you that mum is the word, till I fire the signal gun in my next epistle. This one is long enough in all conscience, for I have five hundred things to do, and each of them duller than another. Conquer America before I get among you, that I may have no plague about the matter; but never forget that I order you to be not only *stout*, but *merciful*. Adieu, dear Cham; what a blessed prospect I have before me, if all bowls run fair! God bless you, my honest friend.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, March 20th, 1775.

I WILL make haste home to England, my dear Chamier, if it were for no other reason but to make you a present of a better microscope for examining narrowly the beauties and blemishes of human nature. The one you peeped through when you wrote your letter, No. 7, was a black, and yellow, and green, and one half of the objects were turned topsy-turvy! and all their protuberances appeared wens and ulcers. I will not allow you, my dear friend, to copy such scare-crows; and the most I can possibly allow you is, when I have painted the outlines of Jack Bull or Yankee in all the glaring tints of sky-blue and rose colour, that you shall dip a good strong pencil in dark brown, and give both force and truth to the picture by a masterly dark hue here and there. How the deuce is it possible that a man of so warm and beneficent mind as yours, blessed with excellent friends, and conscious of their value, should think so hardly as you do of his countrymen? who, with stronger vices and virtues than any other nation under the sun, have never suffered one day to pass over my

head amongst them, without affording me some proof of feelings and generous humanity.

Their necessitous traders in foreign ports, the ferocious miscreants who inhabit the outskirts of our colonies in America, may be guilty of all the crimes you ascribe to them, without their ever affecting my opinions concerning the bulk of the community, and I'll tell you why; because when I buy a large piece of broad cloth, and have convinced myself by a thorough examination that it is well spun, well woven, and warm and durable through nine-tenths of the web, I don't value it a pin the less because it has been fretted and moth-eaten within two inches of the selvedge. I love mankind, and our own homespun part of it, from the bottom of my heart; and it would be a pretty thing indeed, if a fellow like me, who has his Suffolks, his Chamiers, his Drummonds, his Campbells, and his Conways to boast of, should lay thorns upon his own pillow, because there are thieves and pickpockets in the purlieus of St. Giles's. It may very possibly be, my dear Anthony, that I over-rate the qualities of every piece of stuff that I handle; but let me tell you that delusion (if it be one) is the very jewel of my crown, which I will never part with. So much for a dissertation upon ourselves—now to business. I am preparing to set out in a fortnight, or little more, and jogging on comfortably through Bavaria, Suabia, and France (with a fandango of eight days at Paris), I shall get to Calais in the first week of May. I have just heard that Lord Stormont is going to England, but that makes no alteration in my plan, as I neither wish to see the grandees in familiar intercourse, nor to talk politics at Paris. You imagine I joked when I desired you to fit up for me the blue-white room in your castle; I hope you now conceive that it is downright earnest.

You know, my dear Chamier, how earnestly I wish to be of some service to the widow and children of our deceased friend. Perhaps a thorough examination of character, dispositions, talents, and circumstances, may put it in my power to give some salutary counsel; and I give you my word that I shall think my time and efforts very well employed in forwarding an object of such essential importance. I may have too high an idea of my own weight in those matters; but with your assistance, and all the motives of gratitude and affection, I will not despair of being useful to that distressed family.

Tell Mrs. Bradshaw what I say, and prepare me for an interference which I flatter myself will appear to her neither presumptuous nor blameable.

I feel the hurry of approaching departure already coming upon me, and have many bottoms to wind up before I draw on my boots. Adieu then, my dear Chamier. My love to all the *Gang*. Give me a sheet of your best at Paris, load me with your commissions there, and let me once have it in my power to boast that I have given you some proof of my cordial attachment.

Yours,

R. M. K.

The enjoyment of this long desired permission to return to England, must have been enhanced by the kind and flattering manner in which it was conveyed by Sir R. M. Keith's official superior, and the sympathy expressed with his recently wounded private feelings.

[*Private.*]

LORD SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, January 17th, 1775.

DEAR KEITH,

You shall never have reason to deem your confidence ill placed, or thrown away upon a cold insensible friend. I enter zealously into every part of your condition;* and as you have made me heir to the affections you had placed on those who are gone, I will not be an ungrateful, and I hope I shall not be an useless legatee. I write by the common post, and, therefore, am forced to suppress half I feel, and half I wish to say. We'll take the subject up again when we meet. Let it suffice at present that I read your letter with all the warmth with which you wrote it.

The most gracious of masters allows me to send you a leave of absence (which I hereby convey) without waiting for further application. You are at liberty to profit by it, as soon as you please, as I am confident that, if anything happens to render your departure from Vienna inconsistent with the King's service, it will sleep very quietly in your pocket. At present, I foresee no such event. I hope I need not assure you of the cordial satisfaction with which I look forward to our meeting. God bless you, my dear Keith. Believe me, not in expression only, but in fact, your affectionate and faithful friend,

SUFFOLK.

So very small a portion of the life of one attached by feelings of no common warmth and patriotism to his

* The family affairs of Sir R. M. Keith, and the death some months before (to which, and to Mr. Bradshaw's, Lord S. feelingly alludes) of his venerable father, rendered extremely desirable this visit to his native country.

native country, were passed within the precincts of the Britain—still less of the Scotland—he loved so dearly, that the little episode of Sir Robert Keith's election to represent the county in which his family was situated, will not be deemed intrusive; especially as while the readiness with which the popular candidate was hailed by the gentlemen electors, is proved by the flattering letters yet extant in their respective hand-writings—a something apparently equivocal in the support of an influential nobleman, drew forth one of those manly, straight-forward exhibitions of character, which, standing out, as they occasionally did, from the usually unruffled tenor of a life, of which urbanity and good temper formed the prevailing characteristics—serve to prove the perfect compatibility with these endearing qualities, of the nicest sense of honour, and most uncompromising vindication of individual rights.

Sir R. M. Keith having obtained leave of absence in the year 1775, to regulate his private affairs, and enjoy a few months' relaxation from the duties of his mission, had arrived in England towards the end of April. To prove with what feelings the event had been anticipated by his friends, and in corroboration of the features of character assigned to him (it may be thought too partially) above, it is impossible to resist quoting the effusions of a friendship, so honourable to both, as that of Lord Frederick Campbell on the occasion:—

Coombank, April 20th, 1775.

It is a great comfort, my dear Keith, to know that I am so soon to see May—the chimney-sweeper's garlands—and yourself! I doubt, as you say, whether you are a whit richer or more grave than these black gentlemen, but I am sure you are wiser, therefore I need only say a word to your Excellency; the house in Parliament-street is your's, saving and reserving to me

a bed-chamber. The family are all settled here; the remainder of the Parliament, and a great deal of your company, may force me at times to London—nothing less. Fine weather, good friends, and Frederick, will, I trust, often draw you to Coombank. You are no farmer. I have nothing worth sending from hence. Adieu, my dear Keith. This only comes to insure your depositing yourself at my door.

Yours, most truly,

F. C.

A natural delicacy having created some hesitation in accepting the above friendly offer, it was thus reiterated:—

Friday, May 5th.

I doubt, my dear Keith, if there ever was a compliment between you and me; but I am sure there must not be any for the future. I said Parliament-street was yours, and I meant exactly what was said. Mrs. Frederick will not be in town; she expects a little love at Coombank. How I rejoice to know you are coming, *like the spring itself—warm, mild, and cheerful!*

Yours, most truly,

F. C.

The anticipated visit, and others alluded to in the correspondence, having briefly taken place, Sir Robert flew of course, as soon as business permitted, to visit his native country, and cheer with his presence the house which the previous year had been deprived of its venerable head. Of this meeting with his sisters no record has unfortunately been preserved.

Business, however, and the approach of winter, not to mention the attraction of such friends, had recalled Sir Robert to London, when the following note from Mr. Fraser of the War Office, Under Secretary to his friend and principal, Lord Suffolk, conveyed to him

the news of the vacancy in the representation of the county of Peebles:—

DEAR SIR,

I called upon you to mention a circumstance which I thought it might be of moment to you to have the earliest notice of. I have just heard, at the House of Commons, that Adam Hay died of an inflammation this morning. If I mistake not, you are a freeholder in the county he represented; and I fancy, if taken in time, may succeed him. The Lord Advocate for Scotland can be of great use there. Excuse this liberty. Your's very much,

J. FRASER.

A seat in Parliament (not then deemed incompatible with a temporary absence from England, which any change of ministry might terminate—though on his prolonged residence abroad, the upright feelings of Sir Robert Keith led him afterwards to relinquish it) having been to him an object of legitimate ambition, he manifested his usual energy and decision in pursuing it. One day only elapsed from the intimation, ere having written the following letter, expressive of his views, to the friend of his family, and at that time most influential individual in Scotland, one moreover intimately connected with the county of Peebles—Lord Chief Baron Montgomery; he followed it up by a journey so rapid for the season and times, as almost to imitate the transits (which would then have seemed fabulous) of our day.

SIR MURRAY KEITH TO THE LORD CHIEF BARON.

London, 16th November, 10 at night.

MY LORD,

After what your lordship has seen in the letters which were sent to you by express yesterday,

from my excellent patron the Earl of Suffolk, and my good friend the Solicitor-General, I need not say with how much alacrity and zeal I take the liberty to offer myself to your lordship and the gentlemen of the county of Peebles, as a candidate to supply the vacancy in Parliament which the sudden death of Mr. Hay has occasioned. I shall set out to-morrow forenoon for Edinburgh, to request in person the honour of your lordship's countenance and support, which I know to be of infinite weight with the county, and I shall think myself peculiarly happy if, through your lordship's kind assistance and advice, I can render myself agreeable to that truly respectable body of gentlemen, to represent whom in Parliament I shall esteem the highest honour that can be conferred on me. In the meantime, I can only say that I take pleasure in reflecting how much of my success in this fair and honourable pursuit will depend on the active share which your lordship will, I flatter myself, be inclined to take in it, from a regard to the weighty recommendations which have preceded this letter. My own personal claims can only arise from uprightness of my intentions in every branch of public business, and from those sentiments of sincere attachment and respect with which I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

Circumstances did not permit him to leave London until pretty late on November 17th, and on the 19th he had reached within a few hours of Edinburgh—a feat implying "seventy years ago" considerable energy of purpose. He thus writes on that evening:—

SIR MURRAY KEITH TO LORD CHIEF BARON MONTGOMERY.

Wooler Haughhead, Nov. 19th, 8 o'clock.

My Lord,

Relying with the utmost confidence on the kind and powerful support which the Earl of Suffolk and many of my friends in London have given me reason to expect from your lordship in the election for the county of Peebles, I now venture to give you this trouble; at the same time that I think it my duty to convey to your lordship's hands, as early as possible, the inclosed letter from Lord North, which I received from him on Friday afternoon.

The expedition with which I have made my journey from London makes it probable that I have outstripped an express which I took the liberty of despatching to your lordship on Thursday night. It is therefore necessary that I should again express the satisfaction I feel in thinking that my success as a candidate to supply the place of the late Mr. Hay will depend in a great measure upon your lordship's advice and assistance, both of which will lay me under a most essential obligation.

I shall be in Edinburgh an hour after the servant who carries this, and I shall immediately do myself the honour to wait upon you in order to regulate the manner of my application to the gentlemen freeholders* of the county by your lordship's superior judgment and friendly counsel. My intention is to write to them immediately upon my arrival in Edinburgh, as I am now aware that not a moment of time should be lost; and afterwards I shall take the first opportunity of paying my respects to each of them in person. I carry down with

* The epithet was not then one of mere courtesy. Previous to the Reform Bill, the landed gentry of the counties in Scotland elected the representative.

me the Speaker's writ, which I shall deliver to the sheriff when your lordship thinks proper. I write this in a great hurry, and hoping to see you so soon, I can only add the assurances of the sincere attachment and respect with which

I am, &c.,

R. M. K.

P. S.—I must request of your lordship an exact list of the freeholders.

The address by which this was followed up may, by its simple brevity, be contrasted with elaborate modern manifestoes. It bore the then respectful form of an individual appeal.

"SIR,

"The death of our late worthy member, Mr. Hay, having made a vacancy in Parliament, I take the liberty to solicit the honour of your support and interest in my favour at the approaching election for the county of Peebles.

"It will give me great pleasure to have an opportunity of personally assuring you, that if a body of electors so truly respectable shall esteem me worthy to be their representative, I shall have no greater ambition than to strengthen their esteem by my conduct in Parliament; as well as by dedicating to the gentlemen of the county the most zealous, uninfluenced, and grateful services of my future life."

The appeal thus fearlessly and honestly made was most gratifyingly responded to. Sir Robert thus writes to his friend, Lord Suffolk:—

"I dined at the Chief Baron's, with a great number of the principal freeholders. His lordship proposed me as a candidate, drank to unanimity in the county, and every person present assured me of their interest, and

of their hopes that the election will be unanimous. The sheriff of the county was present. I delivered to him the writ of election. The day is appointed for the 15th of December, and no appearance of opposition to be heard of.

"I write to the freeholders this day, and shall, in the course of the next fortnight, visit every one of them, at their houses in the country. And now, my dear lord, let me beg of you to forgive all the trouble I have given you, and to add a favour more to the number I so gratefully acknowledge, by acquainting Lord North with the particulars of this transaction, as well as of my just sense of the essential obligation his lordship has conferred on me by his distinguished countenance in every part of it. The great hurry in which I am will plead my apology to Lord North for not addressing his lordship in a separate letter."

Thus far all had proceeded smoothly towards undisputed success; but an unexpected obstacle having arisen, in some previously-entertained views of Lord March, which it was proposed to Sir Robert, and pressed on him too, to purchase the immediate relinquishment of, by the compromise of engaging to support his lordship on a future occasion—the spirit and decision of character already alluded to gave birth to the following indignant repudiation of an expedient, by which he was assured his return on the present vacancy would be rendered certain. If the remark were not too fanciful, it might be imagined that in the copy, yet extant, the usually firm characters of Sir Robert's clear handwriting had derived additional boldness from the subject-matter of the paper. It runs thus:—

"The warm and unconditional support of Lord March to Sir Robert Murray Keith, when he first mentioned his intention to offer himself as a candidate for the county of Peebles, would have been looked upon by

Sir Robert as an essential favour, and acknowledged accordingly.

"If Lord March withdraws at this moment his opposition to Sir Robert's election, it must be in consequence of the request of his lordship's friends, and by no means of any such request made by, or for Sir Robert. The motive of withdrawing it is to accommodate the wishes of Lord March's friends, and theirs only. Sir Robert therefore receives by this measure no personal favour from Lord March.

"He now stands (as he has done from the beginning) an independent, uninfluenced, and unrestricted candidate, for the honour of representing the county of Peebles in Parliament. He wishes that Lord March's friends, and every gentleman of the county may know that he offers his services to them for this, and every succeeding Parliament, whilst those services can be acceptable; and that in the event of his ceasing, at any future period, to request the honour of their votes for himself, he will be at full liberty to oppose the interest of Lord March, or that of any other individual in the county, whose election may at that time appear to Sir Robert detrimental to the true interests of the county at large.

"This declaration he has read, and delivered in writing to the Lord Chief Baron, allowing him to make what use of it he thinks proper, as Sir Robert intends to hold the same language to every freeholder of the county."

The result of this spirited conduct was (as we shall find on a subsequent and more important occasion) complete. A minute, subjoined, in the same handwriting, runs thus:—

"The Lord Chief Baron has this day assured Sir Robert Murray Keith, in presence of Lord Elliot and Mr. Solicitor Murray, that he is authorised by Lord March, and does offer in his lordship's name to Sir

Robert, Lord March's unconditional support at the ensuing election for the county of Peebles; and it is clearly understood by all these gentlemen that no stipulation whatever is claimed or expected of Sir Robert, by which he can be in any shape restricted, in regard to the part he may think proper to take at any subsequent election for the said county."

Of the kind interest taken by his English friends in the successful result of his expedition—many proofs remain. Previous to the decision, Lord Suffolk thus writes:—

My dear Sir Robert,

I heartily wish you a good journey into Scotland, and all success in the business you are going upon. Wherever my wishes are likely to be attended to, I beg you will let it be known how entirely you have them, and how happy I shall be to see you returned Knight of the Shire for the county of Peebles. Pray present my best compliments to my Lord Chief Baron, and believe me, upon all occasions,

Your most affectionate and faithful servant,

Suffolk.

Mr. Fraser thus warmly expresses himself:—

"*St. James's, Nov. 22nd*, 1775.

"Sir Robert for ever! Huzzah! Success attend you, is my very sincere wish; and I find I shall not be disappointed.—You have all the support you deserve."

When the event had become known, it drew forth from his staunch friend, Lord Frederick Campbell, the following:—

Dec. 25th, 1775.

I did not leave town, dear Keith, till *Friday* morning. Often did I dine with the Drummonds in expectation of seeing you come in, all dirt, and worthy of us Parliament dirty dogs. I knew all was safe, but I wished to

know so from *yourself.* I have now only to rejoice, and thank you for your kind thought of a little quiet and comfort at Coombank. You will make Lady Frederick and me truly happy. When shall we see you?

F. C.

The sojourn in England which so many circumstances, public and private, combined to render agreeable, was abruptly concluded, in the following April, by a hint from a then *subordinate* friend in office, which Sir Robert was not the man to disregard.

Mr. Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, then Secretary under Lord Suffolk, whose friendship for Sir R. M. Keith he seems thus early to have shared, and subsequently to have inherited, thus writes:—

St. James' Street, Friday, half-past 12.

MY DEAR SIR,

As it appears, from Mr. Ernst's* letter of the 6th instant, that the Empress Queen is in a very dangerous state of health, and in a way that may end in her immediate decease, I think it right to submit to you, *en ami,* for your private consideration, whether it may not be expedient to desire to return to your post within the next forty-eight hours.

The alarm may prove premature, or if it should not be so, Mr. Ernst appears, at all events, to be fully capable. Yet your rank, experience, information, &c. &c., will all be of consequence in the opening of a new reign.

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

WM. EDEN.

How promptly this unofficial hint was acted upon, by one whose motto (as the son of Maria Theresa afterwards said of him) was "decision and punctuality," we have *incidental* means of verifying. Though the above note

* Sir R. M. Keith's private secretary.

is without any specific date, yet a letter from Vienna of the 6th, could not, even by *estafette*, have reached London sooner than the 12th or 13th (the course of post between the capitals seems then to have been a *fortnight*); and by the 19th (or a day earlier indeed) the following letter shows the indefatigable traveller, who must have posted day and night, to have reached Ulm; his twenty-four hours' repose at which, was probably justified by accounts of the Empress's amended health.

MR. HUGH ELLIOTT TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT, *Ulm, 19th April*, 1776.

Although it is barely a quarter of an hour since you left me, I cannot resist the desire I feel of putting pen to paper, to thank you again and again for the many unlooked for marks of friendship and thorough confidence which you have heaped upon me within the last twenty-four hours.

I am really writing from the very bottom of my heart, when I assure you, that it is neither the being flattered with your attentions to me, nor interested reflections on the personal advantages I may reap from your connection or support, that dictate the warmest expressions of real gratitude and regard. No! Sir Robert, I hope it is a real sympathy of soul, in those humane, manly, and judicious sentiments, which, even during the short period we have passed together, have displayed themselves to me in their full vigour. Excuse this incoherent style; I am excited, and write as I feel: whatever may have passed between us on self-interested objects, is merely secondary in my mind, to what regards the exertion of principles such as you avow, and, I know, would approve of. But even your advice on that head is not what makes the greatest impression upon me. It is that frank and unreserved proffer of your friendship

that I wish to prove myself worthy of. I feel sensibly the want of necessary knowledge and experience; but no diligence or application shall be wanting on my side to make up the deficiency. Excuse this scrawl. But I am desirous that, among the old friends you are going to meet, this may be permitted to remind you of one, who indeed has no other claim upon you than the sincerity of his attachment, and desire of trying every opportunity to prove how sincerely he is your devoted,

HUGH ELLIOTT.

This letter cannot be passed over without comment; both as affording, from the intensity of the feelings it expresses (the result of one interview), some idea of the fascination for *good,* exercised over the ingenuous mind of youth, by the warmest friend it perhaps ever possessed; and still more from the noble exemplification in the afterwards distinguished diplomatic career of the writer, of the very principles and sentiments with which it had been the benevolent purpose of the veteran in its field, to imbue his docile junior. Twelve years later, Mr. Elliott (then Sir R. Keith's worthy successor at Copenhagen) enjoyed and improved to the utmost a similar opportunity of interfering, with a spirit and dignity, allied to that of his tutor in politics, in the affairs of the same northern kingdoms; "passing over from Denmark on his own responsibility (there being, strange to say! then no minister from Great Britain, Prussia, or France, at the Court of Stockholm,") to avert, by his successful interposition, the horrors of war from both nations, and of absolute ruin from the latter, menaced by the invasion of 12,000 Danish auxiliaries to Russia, with the loss of Gottenburg, and with it of the kingdom. In the self-assumed character (afterwards fully recognised) of delegate from those friendly, but distant, mediating powers, Mr. Elliott, "with a zeal, address, dexterity,

and ability, in a delicate and difficult negotiation, which have been seldom equalled, and never exceeded," enforced and obtained an armistice, by which the King and realm of Sweden were ultimately saved. And then (not less in the spirit of the advice alluded to in the letter) when the versatility and tergiversation of the rescued Prince made him depart from the plain and straightforward path which became his rank and dignity—it was the British Envoy's noble part to vindicate his "country's veracity, stable as the foundation of her island;" and having been complimented by the King on his glorious situation of "an individual, sole depositary of the solemn word of a great King," to remind him, "in the sacred name of truth," of the necessity of adhering to engagements contracted under its sanction.

DR. ROBERTSON* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Edinburgh, August 12th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

Though I have no doubt of your attending to my literary commission of the sixteenth century, as carefully as you would do to a Secretary of State's dispatch of the present one, yet a resolution I have come to obliges me to take the liberty of inquiring what success you have met with in your inquiries about the Mexican paintings in the Imperial Library.

I had determined to defer publishing any part of my History of America, until the whole was completed. But the unfortunate situation into which we have got with our colonies, obliges me to alter that resolution. It is impossible to give any description of their political or commercial situation, or to venture upon any speculation concerning them, while the contest between us

* The eminent historian of America and of Charles the Fifth, and Principal of the Edinburgh University.

remains undecided. Instead of a History, one could write only the conjecture or factious pamphlet of the day. In whatever way the dispute terminates, a new face of things must be introduced into British America; the colonies must either become independent states, or be reduced to a more perfect dependence than formerly. It becomes necessary then, to wait for some time, before one can publish anything concerning them. When that period may arrive is uncertain: and, in the mean time a juncture, when the attention, not only in Great Britain, but of all Europe, is turned to America, and which renders every publication concerning it interesting, will be lost.

This has induced me to seize the occasion that presents itself, and to publish this winter, the two first volumes of my work. These will contain the history of the discovery of America; the progress of the Spanish arms there; the conquest of Mexico and Peru; as much of the natural history of the New World as is fit for a book of general reading; a long inquiry into the manners of its rudest inhabitants; a view of the Mexican and Peruvian monarchies; and a large detail of the state of Spanish settlements, and their principles of colonisation, which have served as our model, and that of all other nations, in their establishments in the New World. I flatter myself, that from the uncommon opportunities I have had of getting information from Spain, this book may prove interesting and curious. I have sold it to my former proprietors, and at the same rate with Charles the Fifth; so that the decision concerning literary property has not affected the sale of books.

From this long detail, with which I should not have troubled you, had I not known that *nous autres savans*, and our affairs are of greater estimation among you continental gentleman of rank and fashion, than they are in this island, you will perceive of how much

consequence it will be to me to be informed *soon* whether you can procure me an accurate copy of the Mexican paintings, that I may judge whether they are of such merit as to be published. I hope you will believe, that I feel very sensibly the kindness with which you undertook this commission, which I am aware will give you a great deal of trouble; I will not add to it by labouring any apology. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, dear sir, &c.

W. ROBERTSON.

P. S.—On Friday, I saw for the *last time* our worthy friend, Mr. Hume.* He died yesterday, as much beloved by those who enjoyed his society, for his amiable qualities, as he was admired by others for his genius and talents.

SIR JOSEPH YORKE† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR KEITH, *Hague, July 26th*, 1776.

I have been so long at the oar, that I am not surprised at anybody for lying upon it sometimes; and as the foreign politics have not, since your arrival in Austria, been of a nature to require a close correspondence between your court and this country, I have not been surprised at your silence, much less have I imputed it to any diminution of your esteem or friendship. Of that I certainly should have been jealous; having long marked you out as one to whom I wished well, of whom I thought well, and to whom I should be always happy to be of service. I am likewise thoroughly convinced that, if you could give me pleasure, or do me service, you would never neglect the opportunity. This is my creed; and which you won't think heterodox.

Her Imperial Majesty does very well to bring her

* This announcement of the death of one great historian by another is very interesting.

† His Majesty's minister at the Hague; and *thirty years'* friend of Sir R. M. Keith.

children to her, since it was inconvenient to go to them. She is happy in seeing such a family rising round her, which I hope she will long live in health to enjoy. If you, in a great circle, talk of a scene of uniformity, what can *we* pretend to? In fact, we do little, and pretend to nothing; nor shall, till exterior events force us out. You were in England during that miserable negotiation about your old comrades here,* and within reach of observing my conduct, which I hope you will have approved; indeed, I did everything in my power, nor can I almost bring myself to believe that any intrigue could thwart a proposal in which the States alone were the gainers. The poor bodies are quite heart-broken, which gives me great concern, after such eminent services as they have performed for above *two centuries*. The young folks are all striving to creep into the British service, and a few years will totally annihilate them.

I have deferred my tour home till America returns to its senses. The measures taken for that purpose have my hearty approbation; and if they don't succeed, I shall never pretend to calculate again.† All the pamphlets from that side which I have lately seen prove their interior horribly divided, and that the majority desire peace at any rate. I am therefore glad to see our operations directed against New England, the *Pandemonium* of America; nor do I despair of seeing the remnant of the rebellion, before many months expire, blocked up in Boston, obliged to surrender at discretion, delivering up its leaders: an event

* The Scots Brigade in the service of Holland. Some miserable motives of economy or jealousy seem to have occasioned their long services to be very ill requited.

† This letter, an excellent one, has been chiefly inserted as proving the sanguine views of a far older and less hopeful politician than Sir R. M. K., as to the issue of the contest with the colonies; and also as throwing light on the succeeding letter from Captain (afterwards Sir Charles) Douglas, from Quebec.

I heartily pray for. Has General Douglas notified his wife's being delivered of a girl? He sent me notice of the event, adding, that had it been a boy he would have written himself! We wanted him to christen her *Isis*, in honour of his brother Charles's ship, which broke through all the ice of Newfoundland to save Quebec; indeed, I had great pleasure in his having succeeded, and felt much obliged by his friendship, in acquainting me with it under his own hand. Adieu, my dear sir. You will never find me otherwise than you have ever known me, *i. e.*, with truth, attachment, and affection,

Your faithful and devoted friend and servant,

JOSEPH YORKE.

CAPTAIN (AFTERWARDS SIR CHARLES) DOUGLAS, R.N.*
TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Isis, before Quebec, May 12th, 1776.

DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Allow me, from the bottom of my heart, to congratulate you, and all the friends of too-long-insulted Great Britain, on the great event of the 6th, replete with ruin to the rebels, and prosperity to the loyal cause in Canada. I have appointed Mr. Butler third lieutenant of his Majesty's ship, in consideration of his zealous and manly services; especially in forcing our way through the ice, without which I possibly had not got here before a reinforcement of two rebel battalions, which met their flying fellow-rebels six miles above this place, and joined with them in a retreat towards Montreal, if not quite so regular, full as expeditious as that

* This gallant officer, whose present exploit earned for him merited distinction, was subsequently immortalised by his participation as Flag-Captain to the Admiral in Rodney's memorable victory, of which he, on the *very following morning*, aware of Sir R. M. Keith's patriotic anxieties, transmitted to him a detailed account.

of the ten thousand Greeks. I therefore, my dear sir, beg that you may strain every nerve to get the appointment of the said man of extraordinary merit confirmed. I congratulate Sir Alexander and Lady Dick upon his promotion. Ask Lord Sandwich for a few traits out of a late Philadelphian pamphlet, called "Common Sense," and wonder how any man can ever have opened his lips, either in or out of Parliament, for those now unmasked traitors. They must have known little of *New England*, or have had little love for the *old one*, who did so! It was found in the quarters of the *apothecary*, who lately arrived with a reinforcement, to command the army before Quebec. I am so busy in making all possible naval preparations for the further progress of our army upwards, that I have only time to say that I am, with unspeakable respect and esteem, dear Sir Robert,

Your most humble servant, and affectionate friend,

CHAS. DOUGLAS.

THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, May, 1776.

SIR,

The last time I had the honour to see you at my house, it did not occur to me that it would be

* The notoriety of this personage, with whose trial and conviction for bigamy all England, and indeed Europe, at one time rang, renders curious her attempted version of transactions so little creditable to her sex and country. When this was written, the fact, afterwards substantiated in open court, of the fraudulent destruction of the record of her prior marriage with Lord Bristol, was rather surmised than proved. Yet so equivocal was her position, that on the death of her second lord, Walpole thus writes, "All tongues are busy with her Grace of Kingston. The Duke is dead, and has given her his whole estate for life, and his personals for ever. To make her *sure* of it, she is entitled in the will, 'My dearest wife Elizabeth Duchess of Kingston, alias Elizabeth Chadleigh, alias Elizabeth Harvey.' Did you ever hear of a Duchess described in a will as a street-walker is indicted at the Old Bailey?" Of the trial he says, "Is it not a burlesque? when there could not be one

necessary for me to trouble you upon the subject that this letter will contain. But as you are sensible how greatly you was esteemed by my dear Duke of Kingston, and my friend Lord Granby, and respected greatly by myself—I take the liberty to acquaint you with some circumstances with regard to my affairs. The inveteracy of my enemies does not only persecute me at law, but also in the public papers, against which there is no guard; nor can I wage war with all the hungry garrets in the English metropolis. My lawyers assure me there is not the least danger of my suffering by this persecution, if my mind can remain easy. For the Ecclesiastical Court gave a full sentence in my favour, and permission (as you and all England know) to marry with whom I should choose; and Mr. Harvey made a public renunciation, even in the Duke's house, by his proctor, in form of law; and I married the forever-dear Duke of Kingston, with the Archbishop's license, before forty persons, with the approbation of my Royal Mistress, the Princess Dowager of Wales, and all the Royal Family, who, with all the Court, wore my favours for a week.

Every token of affection and approbation, during my Lord's life, and at his death he gave me; leaving his personal estate to me for ever, and confirmed my marriage settlement by will; leaving me for my widowhood all of which he was possessed. And it was to my own generosity the family owed the benefit of succeeding to me; for his love and friendship was such, that had I not resisted by prayers and tears to his request, he would have given it to me for ever. The eldest nephew, for many reasons, was disinherited.

person in the hall who was not as much convinced of her bigamy as of his own existence?" She settled, at a later period, in Italy. He writes to Sir Horace Mann, "Your Duchess of Kingston is a shameless mountebank; as great a comedian as Sixtus Quintus himself."

The principal cause was, that when he had (as you know) the advantage of being aide-de-camp to Duke Ferdinand in the late war, he quitted that post of honour and immediate service, to retire into a marching regiment, unemployed, and afterwards quitted the army, and lived extravagantly on the hope of a succession, which it was happily in the Duke's power to give to his more worthy brothers.

But not to trouble you too far, my heart bleeds for the ill impressions my friends in Germany may take from the evil reports of the public papers; and I depend upon your friendship to speak of the affair as it is.* For if, from any quibble in the law (which God forbid, and we do not expect) it should be differently judged, it will be a consolation that good men should know that it was with the sanction of the Church, Law, and Court, I united myself to the most honourable, just, and good being our country ever produced; and I can submit to anything that may befal me in this world, knowing that God will not afflict me more than I am able to bear. I wish you health and happiness; and depending upon your goodness of heart to excuse me, I remain for ever,

Your sincere humble servant,

E. KINGSTON.

* The good will expressed in this epistle, by the too celebrated Duchess, was certainly not reciprocal. Sir R. M. Keith having been jestingly recommended by some one to turn it to advantage, and appropriate the enormous jointure, thus jocularly alludes to it:—"What say you to my marrying (as has been proposed to me) the *double* Dowager of Kingston! If her Grace (as she is fond of *pairs*) would agree to take along with me a strapping Horse Guards' officer, there might be no objection." In another, and more indignant mood, he exclaims, "Faugh! the very idea is revolting! Let her carry her Duchess-ship and her dowry to some other market." Nay, so uncourteously did the usually urbane plenipo return her civilities, that he is congratulated by a correspondent for having, by his interposition, effected her exclusion from the correct court of Vienna!

Few circumstances in the ministerial career of Sir R. M. Keith were a greater source of benevolent satisfaction to himself, or left a more favourable impression of his character on others, than the opportunities he so largely enjoyed, and so cordially improved, of being at once the faithful Mentor and chosen companion of the many youths,* whom anxious parents, of the first families in England, continued, during his whole sojourn abroad, not merely to recommend to his protection, but actually to commit to his uncontrolled authority and affectionate surveillance.

For the more serious part of this labour of love, the soundness of his own early education and principles admirably qualified him; while for the latter he was so thoroughly fitted, by his own buoyant cheerfulness, and singular amenity of disposition, that lads of all ages and characters, not only looked back on the years passed at Vienna, as the happiest and sunniest of their lives, but seem to have poured out their hearts and feelings to him, throughout successive periods of after life, as to some congenial comrade or cherished schoolfellow: while the acknowledgments which his efforts in their behalf earned from distinguished parents, and the figure his *protégés* themselves frequently made in public or private life, must have assisted in crowning the evening of his days with that enviable serenity and cheerfulness, which accompanied him to the close of an honourable existence.

However gratifying to partiality it has been to peruse, and difficult for affection to select from, the *bales* of letters in which the gratitude of young and

* Amounting (according to his calculations, long ere the conclusion of his embassy) to nearly 500, of what he affectionately calls his "John Bulls," his "Vienna lads," and his "colony;" none of whom, he says, spite of some occasional frolics, or rare cases of extravagance, ever gave him reason to be seriously ashamed of them.

old, towards one long cold in death, is embodied and embalmed—a few specimens alone, of a correspondence at once so instructive and honourable to humanity, can be given here. And as everything in biography, bearing however imperfectly the character of a whole, must ever be more interesting than detached fragments, the purpose of the Editor (to hold up to joint regard and approbation men whose friendship, notwithstanding the disparity of years, continued unimpaired during the life of the Mentor by whose counsels the character of the Telemachus of his fond predilection was avowedly formed) may best be promoted by inserting considerable portions of the correspondence of Sir Robert Keith with the two among his "*pupils*"* whom he felt most proud thus to designate; as a memorial of how age can love, and youth respond, where in the one case the fire of youth is tempered by early maturity, and on the other the wisdom of age not only divested of all asperity, but endeared and rendered attractive by the vivacity of youth.

The friendship of Sir R. M. Keith for every branch of the highly connected, highly endowed, and above all, highly respected family of Drummond, had descended to him from his own father; and he felt thus doubly disposed, even independently of strong personal obligations, to act the part of a parent, in its most literal sense, towards one of their offspring. That he did so in its fullest extent, the correspondence of a lifetime will show. That he was not inattentive to its lighter

* The late excellent Earl of Hardwicke; for the completion of the correspondence with whom (so honourable to both) the editor is indebted to his surviving Countess, the venerable lady already quoted in the memoir of the Queen of Denmark; and Andrew Berkeley Drummond, Esq., son to Mr. R. Drummond, of Charing Cross; to the hereditary kindness of whose representative, A. R. Drummond, Esq. is due the communication of letters handed down and preserved by him as cherished heir-looms.

duties, the following letter, written shortly after his return to Vienna, and being joined there by his friend's son, will amusingly evince.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, July 28th, 1776.

I HAVE for this fortnight past been running about the country houses in the neighbourhood of this capital, without the most distant chance of enjoying one hour of that convivial gaiety which reigns at Mistley, Fawley, Wimbledon, Coombank, &c. Yet our noble personages are as civil and attentive as possible at their country seats; but still it is *otium cum dignitate* with a vengeance! and that same *dignitas* is to me a terrible damper of all social enjoyments. I have had my Andrew * for five days along with me at a princely castle, where he was powdered and perfumed by ten o'clock in the morning; then fetched a broiling walk in a *gilded* garden, dined in state, and after playing three grave rubbers at whist, we sallied forth for the evening's excursion in half a dozen coaches and six! Yet I think I showed Master Andrew some sights there, which repaid him in some degree for all the stately tediousness of his mornings; such lakes, meadows, and forests as eye never saw. In the midst of one forest, about sixty wild boars, with all their wives and children, did us the honour to accept of a cold collation of acorns and Turkey corn which we presented to them, and which they ate very comfortably within twenty yards of us, with only a slight screen of reeds between us and their hogships.

In another forest, laid out with taste, and ornamented

* Andrew Berkeley Drummond, Esq., then on his grand tour, and, as the son of his dearest friend, under the special charge of Sir R. M. Keith.

with clean gravel walks, we met (*by appointment*) about two-and-twenty large stags of the red deer kind, to whom notice was given of our approach by the beating of a drum, and this for the best possible reason (as our master huntsman informed us), viz., because they are the most shy and timorous creatures imaginable! Certain it is, however, that they obeyed the summons, and a chasseur (a particular acquaintance of theirs, and who will have the kindness to shoot every one of them in their turn) dealt out their evening's repast in half-pecks of very clean-looking barley. We had our screen as before, and enjoyed their company mightily.

We saw all the *materiel* for hunting, fishing, and shooting of every kind; but to Andrew's great disappointment, there was not the smallest offer of a horse or gun, though the Prince, our landlord, keeps some two hundred steeds for the saddle, and has an armoury of guns equal to one of the rooms in the Tower. The hunting season, however, was not begun, that 's the truth of the matter; and our very good-humoured host does everything by rule and measure, and is moreover broken down with the *gout*, as all great landholders ought to be.

I bade Andrew ask the Prince* (who is really a man of truth) how many huntsmen and their assistants he has in pay, for the care of all his forests and chases? I knew I should enjoy the effect of his answer upon my friend Andrew. The Prince said he really could not tell with any tolerable precision the number of his *men in green*, but he could affirm with safety that they are more than *three hundred*. Now, you begin to think that I have dreamt all this, but Andrew shall vouch for

* As Sir Robert subsequently mentions his intention of visiting *Esterhazy*, the Prince here mentioned must be Prince Lichtenstein; whose family had always cultivated the closest intimacy with Sir R. M. Keith's father and himself.

every word of it; and in autumn I shall carry him to Prince Esterhazy's, in Hungary, where the marvels are still infinitely greater than those I have related. Yet often do I return in imagination to Mistley, Fawley, &c., where nobody wonders at anything but the total absence of care, constraint, and formality! I can be dull with continental great men, because it is a duty of my profession; but I am never the true Keith but when I am amidst the *Gang* and their adherents.

I thank you for the comfort of your letters of 25th June and 11th inst. Your chamærhododendros, and its cousin rhododendros chamæcistus (they must be charming plants by their flowery names) shall be found, if possible, and forwarded to you with care. If I can find anybody near the Hetscher (the high mountain mentioned in your note) who will undertake to gather me some of the seed, he shall be well paid for his trouble. I love to be employed in little commissions for you, it is the only chance I have, at this distance, of being any way useful to you. I hope soon to receive from you a whole bushel of *New York laurels*, which my friend Howe and his companions are as willing and able to gather, as any set of gentlemen we have sent abroad of a long while. When that expedition has achieved its enterprise, I shall think the fate of America once more in our hands. Solace me from time to time with sterling intelligence: it is a most essential obligation.

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, Feb. 11th, 1777.

THERE are sad doings, my dear Chamier, *et mes braves correspondans de Londres* m'ont plantés tous à la fois! Heureusement j'ai la foi du Charbonnier, et je crois que tout ce que je n'entends pas, doit aller *au mieux*

possible! I suppose that you and the *Gang* have been holiday making, and that between this and the Queen's birthday, a page of your handwriting is not to be had for a king's ransom. Don't imagine I blame you, my dear Cham. I would in your place do precisely the same; and if I know anything in this world which is truly delightful, it is the gay and vacant hour in such parties as those you are now engaged in. Heaven bless you and your messmates! There are poor plenipos in the world who look towards Mistley with a longing eye; and to whom a cup of the claret you revel in, would be nectar and ambrosia!

12*th.*

Our Carnival is over, and I cannot say I am sorry for it. I am too old for all the bustle of that giddy season. I saw my *pupils* conclude their festivities last night by a ball at the Spanish Ambassador's, where they danced as merrily, and with a set of as pretty girls as ever I saw in my life. I left them at *six o'clock this morning!* The lads have done themselves honour, and deserve a sound sleep. Apropos to dancing. As I think myself obliged to make some report to the parents of the young gentlemen entrusted to my care, of the figure they may be expected to make in the world, and their progress in the ways of it, I have (for the satisfaction of Andrew Drummond's relations) had the enclosed sketch of his amiable person and enchanting graces drawn in a hurry, only to give them a slight idea of the manly dignity and simplicity of manners, in which he shone upon the late trying occasion of a Court country dance. I beg you will present this rude drawing of the young gentleman to his mother, assuring her, in my name, that it gives but a faint notion of her first-born, who is indeed the darling of the fair sex here. Tell Mr. Rigby that though in another style, his nephew's figure is not less interesting. Tell my good friend, Sir John

Sebright, that young Englefield is a very deserving lad, and much liked. I have been kind to him for everybody's sake, and for his own.* Young Harvey, and Ashton Curzon's son, arrived just in time for our last gay doings. You see, my dear Cham, that my *school* is in good repute; and that I must infallibly end my days in the Marshalsea, if I feed all these boys only upon mutton and turnips. No matter, my mind is made up to it. Is not this like a country schoolmaster's report, at the holidays?

Yours,

R. M. K.

P. S.—This will be delivered to you by Mr. Simonet, a principal dancer of our theatre, and who, under Noverre, did wonders in the character of a dancing

* Of the conduct of Sir R. M. Keith towards his "boys," an accomplished English traveller, whose MS. letters have been kindly placed at the editor's disposal, thus expresses himself:—"The attention and kindness Sir Robert shows them all, is hardly to be imagined. He accompanies them everywhere, introduces them to the best company, and indeed in every respect takes a most fatherly charge of them." And had any motive beyond their own merit been required, to account for the popularity of his *protégés* with the fair sex in Vienna it would be found in the same writer's description of the "Young Austria," of that, and a long subsequent period. Some years later, he thus expresses himself:—"The young men here, almost without exception, are so stupid, and so ignorant, that there is no fear of any person of taste, or indeed of common sense, wishing to form the slightest connection with them. Unless one is at some pains, it is impossible even to meet with them, for in good company they are never to be seen; but to what place they go, or how they employ themselves, I have not been able to discover, as in this country taverns are unknown. It is not surprising that the young ladies of Vienna, who are uncommonly agreeable and well educated, complain much of this; and say that were it not for the English, they would have no one to speak to; and in the Carnival, when there are balls every night, would be reduced to dance with each other, for want of partners. I cannot account for this, but the fact is certain and obvious to the most superficial observer." The remark is corroborated by Sir Robert's frequent and pathetic complaints of the lack of suitable partners *for life* for his charming "*Vienna girls.*"

lover, or hero. His greatest merit with me, and that which procures him this recommendation to your powerful protection, is having guided the movements of Andrew Drummond's fantastic toe, in quality of dancing-master. His wife, who accompanies him, has made his hair stand on end in the character of *Medea*, and that, to a man who loves a high *toupet*, is some merit. There is a brother-in-law, likewise of the party, who plays the first flute in the orchestra; and he has had the honour to instil into the said Andrew Drummond the first principles of the French Minuet, called "*Dragons pour boire*,"* which the young gentleman whistles very melodiously. You see, my dear Cham, that you are bound to protect these good people, who are engaged at the Opera, and will spare no pains to please the public. As a dancing-master for gentlemen or *ladies*, I know none preferable to *Simonet;* and as such you may *safely* recommend him to your acquaintance.

Perhaps Bob Drummond himself may not be averse to rub up his own minuet, in order to make a figure at the balls in Hampshire! Propose it to him, and, for *my sake*, mark his countenance when so reasonable a *step* is put in his way! *Badinage* apart, these Simonets and *Decamps*† are good people; and they have behaved extremely well for several years in this city. Do them what good you can, excuse this trouble, and believe me ever cordially yours,

R. M. K.

* The air immortalised by Scott, as the favourite of the Baron of Bradwardine.

† The continued respectability of a name, long connected with the *English* stage, has concurred with the above, as a motive for preserving this playful billet.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, April 11th, 1777.

SINCE your letter of the 17th of March, I have been looking out impatiently for something of a fresher and more satisfactory purport than our friend Fraser's *dab* of a Gazette. I am *parched and dried up* with an ardent thirst for news, good and substantial news from America; yet am I forced to feed upon the above-mentioned scraps which were as crude and indigested as possible. Tell me, my Cham, when may the campaign open again? I must have Philadelphia in my possession by the middle of May. Pray tell me all about the new Dictator and his powers? I pity his Dictatorship with such a council at his elbow. Will Washington like this absurd pageantry? Has he sense enough to be a peacemaker? The moment of projection in America is fast approaching, and I need not tell you that all my warmest hopes are at stake upon the success of the chemistry. If it should turn those stubborn and ungrateful enthusiasts into loyal subjects, it will have done the best service to Old England, that has been rendered in the course of the last hundred years. If, on the contrary, experience shall convince us of the inefficiency of all our efforts to subdue that vast continent, I am clear for shaking off the Americans; leaving them to their own tottering independence, and making the most of them in the way of unrestrained commerce. It grieves me to see a set of Englishmen (and some of them good men too), recommending such a conduct to the three States of Great Britain as would disgrace their history, and defeat every end and purpose of her soundest policy, and most essential interests.

I hope you are a bad prophet about the non-payment of the King's debts this session. Do it, if you love me;

do it handsomely, and good-humouredly, if you mean that I should thank you. I cannot afford that you should be in the right on that head. I am poorer than the poorest cousin of Job's kindred; yet (like all beggars) I have the spirit of an Emperor. Apropos of Emperors. My Emperor is now galloping to Paris, where he will both surprise, and be surprised to a *great degree.* I'll lay you a wager that not three people in France form any just ideas of his character; he is so totally unlike a Frenchman, above all, a French monarch. Remember, I tell you, that this journey will not lessen his good opinion of John Bull and his children. My little colony have behaved like angels here, during the whole winter, and everybody does them justice.

Andrew, my excellent Andrew, left me (you know) ten days ago, and carried with him my warmest esteem and friendship. Thank Bob in my name, for his kindness in leaving his son so long with me. I am morally certain that he will have no reason to repent it, by any part of his son's conduct hereafter, either as a man of the world, or a man of business. Oh! how happy should I be to spend a fortnight this summer with them both, at some of those hospitable castles, the difference of which I know, and you don't, from the Gothic châteaux, which I have the option of visiting in state and ceremony!—You Englishmen know nothing of this universe but its jollity! You have no notion of the trammels of dulness and dignity!—But I am a happy man in every part of the world, where I find true friends; and here, as elsewhere, I enjoy that treasure! God *bless you, my dear Chamier.*

P. S.—A Frenchman has just told me, the Emperor would have a *grand succès* at Paris. *Le fat!*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND.

Vienna, June 2nd, 1777.

THERE cannot be a better, a kinder, nor a more welcome letter than yours of the 13th May, and I thank you for it, my dear Andrew, with all that cordiality which is so firmly established between us. You have given infinite satisfaction to your friends, by returning to them the same ingenuous, cheerful, and unaffected being they had always known you; and in that point you have gratified my wishes to the full, as much as theirs. I reflect with pleasure upon the twelvemonth you passed abroad, and that pleasure is doubled by the assurance you give me of its having made the same impression upon your mind. In that short space you have seen a considerable quarter of Europe to advantage, and many of the first people who act the principal parts in it. You have laid up a treasure of ideas, together with the pleasing remembrance of many worthy people, and of many personal kindnesses, which must (in so good a heart as yours) add to your general love of mankind; and now you return without the smallest dash of foreign vices or follies, to enjoy the blessings of your own country and government, which (without despising others, or supposing that an honest man may not live comfortably in many other countries) you know to be the happiest and most eligible in all its circumstances of any under the sun.

Thus far I may flatter myself that you have been a gainer by our joint peregrinations; and now let me tell you, my dear Andrew, in the openness of my heart, what I am certain of having gained by your stay at Vienna: the consciousness of having done my utmost to acquit a debt of affectionate gratitude towards a family of excellent feelings; the conviction of having added to

their esteem by these proofs of zealous friendship; and above all, I have acquired the steady and invaluable attachment of a young man upon whose truth and generosity of sentiment I would most gladly rely in all the most trying situations of fortune; and in whose cheerful society I hope to pass some of the most agreeable years of the evening of my life.

There 's the state of our accompt, my dear Andrew; strike the balance, and own to me that my speculation in bringing you out of England has turned out both a wise and advantageous one. Your future success in life will greatly add to my gains; for I shall have an hundred opportunities of saying, with a degree of honest pride, "that same Andrew Drummond, of whom all the world speaks so well, was my messmate and my *pupil!*"

This letter is still a good deal in the style of a *Mentor;* but here I lay down that office, and only reserve to myself the privilege of giving you the frankest and fairest advice my mind is capable of, upon every occasion when your friendship shall demand it of me. God bless you my dear Andrew; you have an hereditary right to be a happy man, from all your principles, your opinions, and your connexions. I have delivered your messages to all your most intimate friends here—they were received as you could wish. I trust you will still keep a warm corner of your heart for Vienna.

Your's affectionately,

R. M. K.

SIR JOSEPH YORKE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 5th, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

You have long been threatened with what now happens to you, that of being importuned with a recommendation of my nephew, Mr. Yorke, who, I hope,

will spend some months at Vienna; at least, as far as my voice goes, he shall, though as he has many uncles, they may think otherwise. I flatter myself you will not find him quite unformed, or uninformed; and beg you will take him under your protection. Tell him frankly what he should or should not avoid, and I am persuaded you will find him docile. He has lived near a year and a half under my roof, and I never saw him pout once, but always gay and active, as well as prudent, though I laid the bridle on his neck. Everybody loves him here where he has behaved himself well, and I shall wonder if he changes for the worse, in still higher and better company. He has gone through his studies with credit, and has taste, and therefore may apply to his exercises. I have recommended riding and fencing especially; the latter he likes, and is an adept at. In short, you may, I think, produce him in good company without that awkward feeling which we often have in our career. Though we have no design to give him a governor, as he will be soon of age, we have found for him a companion on his travels in a sensible, worthy man, a Lieut.-Colonel Wetstein, whom you may remember in the Swiss guards here. I beg leave to recommend them *both* to your kind attention; but don't let them *bore you*, as I know you are *overloaded* with recommendations.

Your friendship to Mr. Yorke, will be a link more in that chain which binds me inviolably and affectionately to you,

Ever, dear Sir, your faithful

JOSEPH YORKE.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

Vienna, August 26th, 1778.

I HAVE been so much occupied for this fortnight past, in the way of my profession, that I have not been able to thank you sooner for your welcome letter of the

4th instant. I will own to you, my dear Yorke, that your long silence had begun to make me uneasy, though I was too just towards you to imagine that you could so soon be guilty of neglecting a correspondence which you had undertaken with pleasure; which could alone keep up your connexion with a man, who loves you very sincerely, and who has promised himself the satisfaction of following you step by step, through the most dangerous years of your life. I need not tell you, therefore, how welcome that letter was to me, nor how much I was pleased with the account of your tour, and of the kind reception you met with at Milan. Count Firmian is certainly one of the most amiable, as well as hospitable of men, and the obligations he heaps upon our countrymen are without measure or end. I am glad you had an opportunity of satisfying his taste for English literature, by procuring him a copy of Lord Hardwicke's late publication. It is a fortunate thing for a young man in your situation to find himself able to make some sort of return to such favours as those you have received from Count Firmian. You will, I am afraid, be more sensible of their value, after you have made the tour of some of the largest cities of Italy, where I am assured that hardly a shadow of the Milanese hospitality is to be met with.

May you, my dear Yorke, be laying in a stock of useful and entertaining ideas, for the advantage of your future life; while Sir Joseph and I are much less agreeably employed in watching the effects of those passions to which sovereigns are not less subject than the middling classes of the people in the nations they rule over.

You and your companion are often mentioned here, and with kind remembrance. I wish it were compatible with your projects to pass part of next winter at Vienna, but of this I dare not flatter myself. Wherever you go, my dear Yorke, remember that it is your duty to prepare

yourself for an active life, and that much is expected from you by a family, which has distinguished itself by producing men of sound judgment, extensive learning, honourable principles, and possessed of the laudable ambition of rendering themselves useful to their country. You will disappoint that family and me most egregiously if you fall short of those recent examples which your grandfather, your father, and all his brothers, have set before you.

Adieu, my dear Yorke; you are accustomed to hear me preach upon the *application* of the years of life upon which you are now entering. You know that upon the proper employment of them, must, in a great measure, depend the success of all your future years, and you will forgive my resuming so often the style of a pedagogue, when you recollect that it is dictated by the warmest, and most inviolable friendship. I beg you will assure Colonel Witstein of my sincere esteem and regard. Write to me soon, and believe me ever yours most faithfully,

ROBERT MURRAY KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, June 3rd, 1778.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Andrew, for your long epistle by my servant. It did not contain much satisfactory news from home, but that was no fault of yours. The times were *abominable*, and I do not wonder at every honest man who feels and thinks as you do, being almost sorry to sit down to describe them. May I not hope that they are now much altered for the better, and that all will turn out in the end, to the honour and advantage of poor Old England, who has indeed been hardly dealt with by many of her children, both abroad and at home! There exists not a John Bull who has that wish more earnestly at heart

than I have, nor one who would do more to forward its accomplishment. I beseech you, therefore, my dear Andrew, to double your diligence till affairs are more in the way of national exertion, and steady perseverance. I am not unhappy enough to harbour a doubt of honour and success, from the moment our resources are employed *as they ought to be.* We in Germany are drawn up in battle array, and with such magnificent armies as the sun never shone upon. But all sides are averse to war, and I see good reason to hope that with mutual good temper, and fair explanation, matters may yet be made up in an amicable manner. May the same blessing befal us with our American children, and then, my dear Andrew, huzzah! I think we shall give our petty intriguing neighbours such a ratification of *their* American Treaty as they will remember for half a century to come! Don't imagine that I mean to let them off, whether our American peace-makers succeed or not. No! Master Andrew; their late proofs of *friendship* must have a suitable return. I must tell you, for my own satisfaction, and that of my *intimate friends,* a pretty trick they wanted to play me here. Within these ten days, the Court of France have been trying with *all their might* to get an American agent introduced to the Empress Queen; though under the denomination of a *gentleman traveller only.* Nothing ever was more indecent than such an attempt, nor more disrespectful to their Imperial Majesties, whose sentiments in regard to the rebels, and whose friendship towards the King are equally well known. However, France sticks at nothing to support the iniquitous cause she has espoused, and if Mr. Lee (the person now here) had been admitted to the Empress's presence, under any shape, they would have built a thousand false stories upon that single circumstance, and have made the Americans them-

selves, and all distant nations, believe whatever might suit their own purposes.

I have the satisfaction to assure you, that the Empress Queen has made known in the most dignified, as well as peremptory manner, her determined resolution to give no countenance whatever to such an emissary, nor to admit him by *any means* into her presence. This decisive rebuff is a great mortification to France, which her ministers have deservedly drawn upon themselves, by venturing to make an attempt, as injudicious as unbecoming.* This first proof of the Empress's justice, as well as regard for the King, will be highly agreeable to his Majesty; you will easily judge how much satisfaction arises from it to me. The merit of the whole transaction is with their Imperial Majesties, and their upright Ministers; my share in it is only to have foreseen the event a *twelvemonth ago*, and to have taken proper measures to defeat it. Perhaps you may have heard all this before from Cham; but at all events I meant well by this detail of it. Give me in return some good news; I stand more in need of these than tongue can tell! I can hardly guide the pen, my fingers are so tired with scribbling!

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR NATHANIEL WRAXALL TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Florence, April 17th, 1779.

My dear Sir,

I feel myself so happy and so honoured, in the permission of correspondence with you, that nothing except the hurry incident to travelling could prevent me from addressing you much oftener. In revenge,

* The spirited exclusion of the emissary from Prince Kaunitz's *soirées* by their female president has been elsewhere narrated.

Manners and I talk of you at least ten times a day. 'Tis not possible to think of Vienna, without seeing you in every company or situation. Two winters which I had the happiness to pass under your protection, and almost in your constant society, form too strong a *liaison* to be easily broken, particularly when gratitude adds its force to respect and attachment.

We have now been three months in Italy, and have had too much reason to ascertain the justice of your prediction, that "we should find much for the eye, but little for the heart." We have been, as you know, at Naples; I was much more pleased with Naples than with Rome. Its position, its environs, its volcanoes; the islands of Capua, Ischia, and Procida, scattered on the sea; its picturesque landscapes, and the celebrity of the surrounding country in Roman history and fable —all these circumstances conspire to charm the mind, and warm the imagination. We went to Baiæ, to the Cape of Misenum, to Pompeii and Stabiæ, to Herculaneum, to Portici, and to Cumæ. We visited Lake Avernus, the Acheron, the Lucrine Lake, the Cave of the Sybil, by which Eneas descended to Hell, and the Elysian Fields. All is still (after eighteen centuries, and earthquakes, and repeated volcanic eruptions) very much resembling Pliny's and Strabo's and Virgil's descriptions.

The Queen of Naples very much exceeded in person, in elegance of manners, in accomplishments, in understanding, my ideas of her. She is inconsistent, *inconsequente*, and capricious in her conduct as a woman and a queen; but she is much superior to the people who surround her, and were she well advised, is unquestionably capable of being useful to her subjects.

I told you, I think, of our charming journey through Styria, Carinthia, and the Tyrol. We only stopped a day at Verona, at Vicenza, and Padua. At the last

place we went to look at Wortley Montagu's tomb. By order of Lady Bute, Mr. Strange has erected a little monumental stone to him in the cloisters of the Augustine Convent, and under the inscription is a small fish, alluding to his end. We were both much pleased with Venice. It rises as by enchantment from the waters, and we were never tired of admiring its beauty. We merely *saw* the Doge; a fine looking man for his years. He is said to possess good qualities, but has many enemies. Madame Foscarini is very handsome. She said, when I saw her in her gondola for a few minutes, and delivered the ambassador's letters, that she should set out soon for Vienna. *Apropos* of that word, we talk of you perpetually, and of your dinners, and your claret, and of everything which *Vienna* suggests.

We are infinitely indebted to you for your recommendation to Sir Horace Mann, who has treated us with the utmost civility and attention. We made only a very short stay at Bologna and Ferrara, and shall shortly go on to Rome; though here we are already burnt alive, and the Arno has not a foot of water in it; and they say it is worse at Rome and Naples. We have passed two or three mornings with the Venus de Medicis. She is one of the very few things I have ever seen which rose above my expectations. I am astonished how marble can be so beautifully perfect, and am sure you would think as I do. All the upper portion of the figure seems alive, and more resembles flesh than marble. I am unable to find anything like an imperfection in her; the head and face are of a heavenly beauty; but all this you have heard before at least an hundred times; and so you have how much I love you, and feel indebted to you for all your goodness. Continue to me your protection and your friendship; and believe me, your ever affectionate and obliged,

N. WRAXALL.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

DEAR YORKE, *Vienna, June 7th*, 1779.

Your letter from Turin gave me infinite pleasure, as it leaves me no doubt in regard to your perfect recovery. The air of Switzerland, and the affectionate care of Colonel Wetstein and his family, will complete your cure. Your gratitude towards Colonel W. is extremely well placed, and it has been matter of real satisfaction to me to find that Doctor Congalton (for whom I have long entertained a sincere esteem) has deserved so well of you by his skill and attention. The experience you have acquired in this long and dangerous illness, will have proved to you, my dear Yorke, that a zealous friend is an inestimable treasure; and that the best claim we can have to the kind offices of others during distress or sickness, must arise from our generous and candid behaviour towards them in times of health and prosperity. I myself gathered this useful lesson, and nearly at your time of life, from the unreserved attentions of my brother officers towards me, during a very tedious illness; and I have loved mankind the better for it, and felt myself more desirous to fulfil all the offices of friendship ever since. It will make me very happy to hear that your native air, and the kindness of your numerous friends, have removed every vestige of your long and dangerous illness.

I have often told you, my dear Yorke, that I know no young man who enters into the world with so many advantages as you do. I am persuaded that on your return to England you will be more and more convinced of the value of those blessings which you are born to enjoy. May every step of your life add to their efficacy, for the public good, and your own private

happiness! You have rank, affluence, and the partiality of the whole nation secured to you by inheritance. You have truth, honour, and patriotism strongly impressed upon your mind by education, and by the example of all your relations. Every road to consideration and contentment is open to you: you are master of the choice. But remember, that, with all these uncommon advantages, you may fall very far short of that happiness which I most sincerely wish you, unless you keep up with unwearied perseverance that activity, both of mind and body, which can alone secure to you health, and the means of filling up your time both usefully and agreeably. I would not purchase the wealth of India by the sacrifice of my love of occupation; and I would rather never see a coach than be deprived of the pleasure of walking out. Don't imagine, my dear Yorke, that I mean to set myself up as a model; but I give you my example, among five hundred others, to prove that the art of being happy depends more particularly upon the talent of banishing *sloth* and *ennui*, than upon any other circumstance in life.

And here ends my sermon; you are accustomed to my style of preaching, and you forgive it, because you do justice to the motive which dictates it. Be a useful and active member of society; cheerfulness and comfort will be found at every hour within the circle of your own family; and no man living will rejoice more sincerely in your success than I shall do. I hear your name mentioned with great kindness in my favourite society, and am charged by them with every good wish. Believe me, with inviolable attachment, your faithful friend,

R. M. Keith.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, June 12th, 1779.

I AM afraid, my dear Andrew, that some cursed captain of a Dunkirk cutter, is now amusing himself and family with the perusal of a score of my letters from my friends in England; and Heaven knows that in these moments of impatience and anxiety, I would sooner spare the captain the last hundred pounds I am master of. Sad times indeed! Not a line from home since the 21st of May! My last grain of patience is well nigh exhausted. Where is our friend Grant? Not broiling in St. Lucia, I hope, in that inactivity which little suits his temper or our circumstances? Should that unfortunately be the case, I should, from my heart, pity him, and the brave corps which is under his command! I wish they were well back on the Continent of North America, where Clinton would know how to employ them to good advantage. Clinton is an admirable fellow! * His forces, I am afraid, are but scanty; yet I flatter myself that his campaign will go a great way towards breaking the neck of rebellion in America.

The French talk much upon the Continent of invading you this summer. They may, perhaps, land a handful of men in some distant corner of the kingdom, or vex

* It is pleasant to find that this opinion (founded on joint services in Germany) was mutual. Mr. Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland) thus writes a short time previously :—"Everybody who has seen you at Vienna speaks in the highest (though the justest) terms of the respectable figure you make there, and of the honour which, in every sense, you do to your country. General Clinton, among others, (though he does not know you intimately) spoke of you in the warmest manner ; and made the party with whom I met him at Lord Buckingham's (Lord Barrington, and your friend the Solicitor-General, &c.) regret much that there are no means of proportioning the appointments to the *merits* of the ministers. Yours, in that case, should be at *least* ambassadorial."

you with an attempt upon Ireland; but I hope that no man of sense in England can ever dread any serious consequences from the common bugbear of invasion, even if our flippant neighbour should strain every nerve to attempt one. Tell me, my dear Andrew, all you know about this and a thousand other interesting articles. I have not seen the colour of your handwriting since Admiral Arbuthnot set sail to go to the relief of Jersey! That was a pretty exertion of the Gallic power, and met with the fate it deserved!

I wish you with your military spirit, could feast your eyes with the sight of those noble and spanking regiments of infantry, and cavalry, which are passing this way every day, on their return homewards. What say you to regiments of infantry, three thousand six hundred men under arms? and corps of cavalry of at least two thousand each? May I live to see these fine fellows, once more joined to a handsome corps of John Bulls, and hastening to pay the French for all their double-dealing! If the choice of an enemy were left to the Austrian troops, I imagine they would gladly give the preference to the French, who, indeed, have used them very scurvily. But all these are only political dreams, which, alas! have no appearance of being realised in *our* days. The more's the pity!* *Apropos* of John Bulls, I am forlorn and childless beyond all former example. But I expect the two Norths, and Brydone, in three weeks, and they shall be made most welcome. Tell Lord North so in my name, and in *expressive terms.*

* Their joint occupation of Paris, did not probably enter into the writer's wildest and most sanguine *dream.*

PHILIP YORKE,* ESQ., TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR, *London, December 8th*, 1779.

You will do me the justice, I daresay, to believe the repeated reproaches I have made myself for not having written to you since my arrival in England. Four months have now elapsed since my return to my *Penates*, which, though I was very far from being weary of travelling, or remaining abroad, produced in my mind the most agreeable sensations. The first idea that struck me in my journey from Harwich to London, and which I shall always remember with pleasure, was the air of happiness and content that appeared on the face of everybody I met; very different from what a foreigner would expect to meet with, from the gloomy exaggerated accounts he reads in our own newspapers, or from what an Englishman observes in those countries which are now so obliging as to *pity us*. It is true that taxes are high, and are likely to increase; but I hope they will be borne with cheerfulness; for the only way of lightening them hereafter, is to strain every nerve in order to get the better of our powerful enemies. I have learned, or at least I wish to persuade myself, that I have learned, from you and Sir Joseph Yorke, to view things in the most favourable light. I am sorry to find that essential part of character, to our own and others' happiness, so rare in this country. Everybody seems to despair of

* Afterwards Earl of Hardwicke. The patriotic and truly British sentiments expressed in this letter (and in every page of a lengthened correspondence) continued to actuate this excellent nobleman throughout a life, divided between the most active exercise of social and domestic virtues, and strenuous exertions in the service of the country he loved; first, in both houses of the British Legislature, and afterwards as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, during a period of extremely critical agitation in that distracted country; his popularity with both parties in which bore testimony to his rare prudence and moderation.

our getting through our difficulties; and I look upon this despondency as the worst symptom of the times. I have attended the debates in both houses since the opening of the session, three or four times; and as far as hearing several good speeches could give me pleasure, I received the highest entertainment. Lord Lyttleton's speech the first day was certainly an able one for his party; but it tended to increase the flame in Ireland, as well as others that have since been spoken. Lord Stormont is one of the best speakers in the House of Lords, which, considering the little practice he has had in public speaking, and the time he has spent abroad, is rather extraordinary.* But I have no idea of Demosthenes, Cicero, Lysias, or Hyperides surpassing the eloquence of the Chancellor.† His speeches on the first day of the session, and on Lord Shelburne's motion respecting Ireland, were the most powerful I have any conception of, and both times called up Lord Camden to answer him. Lord Shelburne made the Chancellor a compliment at the expense of Lord Bathurst, in saying he had restored the dignity of the place he occupied.

In the debates of the House of Commons, a vulgarity prevails that is highly unedifying. To give you an instance of it, I need only quote an expression of Temple Luttrell's, the first day of the session. Abusing the ministry for the campaign of last summer, "You have trusted," said he, "altogether to Providence; Providence has been your *Mungo here, Mungo there,*" &c. In former days, a member would have been reprimanded for so low an expression, which falls little short of blasphemy. In the course of his speech, he made quick transitions from this low and familiar style, to the sublime; in one of these he was going on, "Have ye

* His lordship had been chiefly absent on foreign missions; having preceded Sir R. M. Keith at Vienna, and afterwards been ambassador at Paris.

† Lord Mansfield, uncle to Lord Stormont.

not enough, have ye not enough?" &c., when somebody sitting behind him, answered, "Yes, quite enough," and stopped him in his career for a couple of minutes. I will not trouble you with any more remarks on the debates, which you will have seen too fully, and too partially stated in the papers; which so obligingly communicate to all Europe, whatever reflections a member of parliament may throw out, and add to the inveteracy of our enemies, or to the indifference of our lukewarm allies by some unjust or ill-timed sarcasm. But the mischief done by those daily libels is not merely confined to our general foreign interest; they even foment disputes between individuals at home; witness the duel between Adams and Charles Fox, which was entirely owing to an expression of the latter, exaggerated in Almon's paper. If the ministry were less timid, they would, I think, have taken some notice of Almon for publishing the King's speech the morning *before it was spoken;* and put in, as given to him by a friend, who had heard it read at the Cockpit the evening before. It is believed by many that Lord North will go out this winter; indeed, from the ill-humour that reigns against him, and the uncommon violence of opposition, which sticks at *nothing,* I should think that his situation must be singularly unpleasant.

Lord Lyttleton's death afforded matter of conversation for a few days last week. Various reports have been spread as to its immediate cause, but I hear it is well attested that he had a dream three days before his death, in which a woman in white appeared to him, and predicted the event within that time. This he told the next morning to Mrs. Flood, his relation, who was then, with other company, at his house. Some people are absurd enough to believe that the ministry *poisoned* Lord Lyttleton, and hired Mr. Adams to cut Fox's throat! I suppose, if any of the ministers were brought

to the block, the same gentlemen would be obliging enough to undergo the ceremony in their stead, *car il n'y a qu'un pas de plus à faire.*

Having talked to you so much of this, I must just say a word of myself. You can have no idea how much I should like to be with you this winter at Vienna, and you will say, "then, why don't you come?" But this scheme is now rendered impracticable, as I shall come into Parliament much sooner than I wished. Sir John Cotton is so ill as to be obliged to resign his seat, and Lord Hardwicke is extremely desirous that I should come in for the county of Cambridge. Indeed, if I lose this opportunity somebody else must be chosen; and when I stand at the general election, I shall incur the odium of disturbing the peace of the county; whereas if I am chosen now myself, that odium will fall on my opponent, and I shall be the person *attacked.* On the whole, it is better for me to come in rather earlier than might have been desirable, rather than to have no object or occupation for three or four years of my life. On the score of my Italian fever, I mean to avoid the bad hours of our London life. As to clubs, I have a great aversion to them,* and always remember with pleasure, your excellent advice about that sort of life. They have no temptations for me, and I trust never will. In all times, and all places, I shall ever remain,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend, and obliged, humble servant,

PHILIP YORKE.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

DEAR YORKE, *Vienna, March 3rd,* 1780.

I am ashamed to have delayed so long to answer your letter of December 8th, which (I say it

* The clubs of that day, be it remembered, of which gambling formed the prominent feature.

without flattery) was a very striking picture of the times, though not a pleasant one. You, my dear Yorke, are one of the very few young men, who, with a sagacity very uncommon at your age, can look upon the pursuits of one half of mankind, and the childish amusements of the other, with a good-humoured indulgence; yet with a firm resolution to keep clear of both. The House of Commons, as it is now constituted, and with that spirit of licence and disorder which many of its principal orators breathe, both within and without doors, is become a second edition of Broughton's amphitheatre; where, in my early youth, I have seen many bold muscular fellows, who might have done honour to their country, or bled nobly in her cause, demean themselves so far, as to cut and slash one another, without any real cause of quarrel, or any other ambition than that of carrying off the largest share of the pence collected at the door, or thrown upon the stage, by the giddy multitude. I am not one of those who think it unfair to bait a minister; on the contrary, I think a *premier* the best and most proper of all wild beasts for that sport. But I own that it appears to me the height of cruelty, as well as madness, to tie Old Mother England down to the stake along with him; and to turn loose upon both all the Bourbon and American bull-dogs, in hopes of creating glorious mischief and universal confusion. Make haste, my dear Yorke, you and a score more of my Vienna lads, to get into St. Stephen's chapel; and bestir yourselves in rescuing the worthy old lady from being pulled to pieces, at the instigation of her frantic children. Set her once fairly on her legs again; keep foreign curs at a distance from her dwelling—and then (in God's name,) take any minister, or any half-dozen of placemen you please, and hunt them down in whatever manner may best amuse you. I shall rejoice in hearing of your sport, though in all

probability, it will not be in my power to be an eye-witness of it, as the indispensable duties of a foreign mission can hardly be made compatible with those of a member of Parliament.

I have, in justice to my constituents, let them know that I shall not expose them at the general election, to the continuation of the inconvenience they have felt, for several years past, by the absence of their representative. A better (because a more useful) servant of the public will take my place; and my only disappointment will be that of not being able, in person, to applaud the manly and disinterested principles which several of my Vienna pupils are prepared to play in the House of Commons. But I am filling my paper, while I have a thousand thanks to give you for the very welcome token of your remembrance which was delivered to me some weeks ago. The antique is very pretty, and I need not tell you that it will go with me to my grave. Let me hear often from you, my dear Yorke, and believe me, ever most cordially, your friend and servant,

R. M. KEITH.

PATRICK BRYDONE,* ESQ. TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, June 9th, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I well know how much you must be alarmed at our present tumults, and although you will probably have more particular accounts of them than any I can give you, I will not lose the opportunity of telling you at least, that we hope they are now happily subsiding, and all will be soon quiet again.

As I have only half an hour till the post goes off, I

* The celebrated traveller in Sicily, to whom English readers are indebted for the first acquaintance with the grand and picturesque features of Mount Etna. His version, at the moment of a different conflagration, it was thought might be acceptable.

shall not go back to their origin; that you already know, as well as the violent proceedings of Tuesday last, at both Houses of Parliament, where many of the members were very roughly used.* A great mathematician, who has been calculating all his life, assured me he had computed the numbers which marched from St. George's Fields, and that they were at least 30,000. The streets were every where filled with them, and many were already armed with clubs. On that night they burnt down Newgate, and several private houses; Sir George Saville's and Lord Mansfield's of the number. Most of his valuable MSS. were consumed. The justices who presumed to act, were immediately doomed to destruction, and their houses burnt or pulled to pieces. Lord North's house was attacked about two in the morning, with flambeaux and faggots, but a very few of the light horse who were placed in the square, charged full gallop down the street, and they were dispersed in a moment. On Wednesday they were exceedingly tumultuous, and a proclamation, approaching nearly to martial law, was issued in the evening. They had set fire to the King's Bench, New Bridewell, the Fleet, and many private houses: the appearance of all these fires in different quarters was very tremendous. Many parties of the Guards were sent, but when it was too late; for all these buildings were entirely consumed.

* "It is hardly possible (writes one who was present) to conceive a more grotesque appearance than the house exhibited. Some of their lordships with their hair about their shoulders, more of them as pale as the ghost in Hamlet, and all of them standing up in their several places and speaking all together. Lord Mansfield came in with his wig dishevelled; the Archbishop of York had his lawn sleeves torn off, and flung in his face. The Bishop of Lincoln's carriage was destroyed, and himself taken, in a fainting fit, into a house; the Duke of Northumberland was robbed of his watch and purse, and Lord Sandwich narrowly escaped destruction."

As Lord North's house was threatened with a second attack, I went to assist in defending it. We had several false alarms during the night, but to our disappointment, no attack was made, for we were well prepared to receive them. About three o'clock the two great parties of the Guards returned; Sir J. Wrottesley said he had marched across St. George's Fields, passed the King's Bench in flames, and attacked near the river a large body of the rioters. They were not in the least afraid; having persuaded themselves that the soldiers would not fire on them. On the first discharge, they dispersed, and he chased them with bayonets, which completed the rout. Many of them had loaded a boat with powder, and were going off; he fired on them, and killed the greatest part; the rest leaped into the water and mud, and were stifled. Col. Leake, who commanded the other party, marched to the Fleet, where they were very riotous. Possessed with the same infatuation, they would not stir, till the bayonets touched them. He charged them, and they were immediately dispersed; leaving, he thought, upwards of 100 killed.

Next morning I went over all the ground, and found the numbers had been much exaggerated. Two attempts were made on the Bank, and many of the wretches were killed. Not one of the soldiers of these parties was hurt. I went through the whole city yesterday, and saw very little disturbance; they have retired to lurking places, and I do not believe they will ever dare to come forth again. The consternation, however, was universal, and all the shops were shut at five o'clock. Blue flags were flying from every house. Parties of the Guards were sent to pull them down; and to tear the blue cockades from every hat. Many made resistance, but at last all complied. I observed the people in all quarters were arming themselves for their own defence;

and, perhaps, it may not be so easy to make them disarm again. Guards are placed at the houses of all the Cabinet Ministers, and some others. We have now about 10,000 troops in London; and as they are dispersed in every quarter, cannot, I think, be in any kind of danger. If the officers could have acted at first, without the civil magistrate, all would have been prevented; but the justices knew they would be sacrificed.

This day all has been quiet. A few wretches have been taken, and some put to death; and I suppose they will be hung up or shot immediately, there being no prisons left to confine them in. Indeed, they have not had severity enough, which, at the beginning of such tumults, would have been the truest mercy. I am told they are now determined on vigorous measures. A privy council has sat for many hours this evening; and I believe they are sending Lord George Gordon to the Tower at this very instant. I think they should have sent him to Bedlam long ago. You would not know London, were you to see it at present. Patroles and reliefs are constantly passing through every street; and encampments in both the parks. The Parliament does not meet till Monday the 19th, as it cannot exercise its functions under martial law. What an opportunity for an enterprising P—! It is believed that the poor enthusiast, Lord George, has been only a cat's paw, though unknown to himself, in this affair. There are reports of commotions in the country, but I hear totally without foundation; and I do not believe that even the present rioters will assemble in any numbers. There will be a violent push to repeal the act, but I hope they will not be weak enough to comply. Lord George told his people on Tuesday, that it would be repealed; on which they committed all these outrages. If anything remarkable should happen, I shall take the liberty of writing; but here is the bellman at the door. Our

compliments to the ladies at Vienna, for whose health and welfare we make vows and libations after dinner. I have the honour to be, with the sincerest respect and attachment, your most obliged servant,

PATRICK BRYDONE.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, June 28th, 1780.

I NEED not tell you, my dear Andrew, how much I was afflicted and depressed by all the shocking accounts which were received from England within the last ten days. Neither shall I attempt to paint to you the shame, as well as sorrow, with which I heard of those atrocious outrages committed by a fanatical mob against those ministers of peace whom foreign powers have sent among them, and whose persons and habitations ought to be peculiarly sacred, both in the eye of public law, and common sense. Such barbarous excesses would dishonour a nation of savages. May they be the last of the kind to disgrace our annals! and may the wisdom and firmness of Government provide hereafter in the most effective manner, for the support of the law of nations, and of legal order throughout every part of the British Empire! Even these melancholy convulsions may be turned in some shape to the advantage of the public, if a proper use is made by the Legislature, of those salutary lessons which they afford. God grant it may be so! we have need of such a reformation, and of a steady hand to effect it.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear friend, for your several letters, during these abominable disturbances; and particularly for that postscript to the last of them, which gave me the first news of Lord George Gordon's being sent to the Tower. That welcome piece of news was still very doubtful here, by all the letters of the 9th,

which had reached Vienna; but I stuck to *your* information, and you will judge how much I was obliged to you for it. Let the law have its full course with that mad enthusiast; and be you the first to tell me that his punishment, and that of every traitor who was deeply engaged in that horrid plot, have avenged the laws of England, and the honour of our government. Pray, my dear boy, give me every ray of light you can as to this mysterious business, and send me every clever print or publication it may produce. I don't mind a few guineas of expense on such an interesting occasion. Will not some of the leaders of opposition see the errors of their late conduct? and make up for them hereafter by supporting government? If Rodney and Clinton would afford us a couple of handsome gazettes, we should still hold up our heads, and laugh at the Bourbons.

The interview between the Emperor and Czarina succeeded so much to the satisfaction of all parties, that these two sovereigns set out together in the same carriage for Smolensko. There they parted on the 11th instant. The Emperor went to Moscow to pass a few days, and from thence he proceeds to Petersburgh, to make a second visit to the northern Semiramis. May much good result to humanity, from these repeated meetings! This monarchy, and that of Russia, ought to live in good harmony and connexion with each other.

Your friend, Madame de Thun, and her eldest daughter dine with me to-day, along with Prince Kaunitz. The Pergens are in the country; Madame de P. desired me to thank you for your postscript, which sent Gordon to the Tower. You would like the Vienna people still better than you do, if you knew how much they take to heart all our late distresses. How does Chamier? I am most anxious till I hear that all the fatigue of the last painful fortnight has not prevented

his recovery.* Adieu, my dear Andrew; be assured that every line you write in these perilous times is a real obligation to

Yours ever most cordially,
R. M. K.

[*Private.*]

LORD STORMONT† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR, *St. James's, July* 11, 1780.

Though I happen to be a good deal hurried to-day, yet I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of thanking you most sincerely for your very affectionate private letter of the 24th past.

The attack intended, or at least threatened, against my house did not take place, but I was wounded much more sensibly than I could have been by any personal outrage, by that offence to Lord Mansfield, the consequences of which might have been dreadful indeed.‡ But I thank God his health is not in the least affected, and though he feels severely the loss of all his valuable

* Mr. Chamier being Secretary to the War Office, would necessarily be much harassed by the sudden assembling and encamping of troops.

† Secretary of State, and nephew to the venerable judge.

‡ When the prisons of Newgate and Clerkenwell, the Fleet, the Marshalsea, and the gaols of Southwark were emptied of their felons, the houses of Sir John Fielding, Mr. Hyde, and Mr. Cox, magistrates for Middlesex, were plundered and burnt. The dwelling of the Lord Chancellor was saved by posting in it a few soldiers; but the abode of Lord Mansfield met a different fate. Furniture, books, and pictures, and what was a still more irreparable loss, his manuscripts, formed during a long and active, a judicial and political life, all were sacrificed to the brute rage of the rabble. The amiable Chief Justice escaped by a back way, and wrapped in a cloak, arrived at the door of a friend, requesting admittance.

A private letter to Sir R. M. Keith, written during the events, estimates the loss in books, MSS., bonds, and valuable papers, belonging to himself and others, in Lord Mansfield's house at 40,000*l.* The general damage to the city of London from 600,000*l.* to 800,000*l.*

manuscripts, yet, upon the whole, he shows a wonderful calmness and serenity.

Cruel as this loss has been, yet perhaps the appearance he made in Parliament the first time we met, after the dreadful outrage, is so far an alleviation, that it has added to his fame, by placing him in a point of view in which he never could appear before. To rise up at such a moment, quite unprepared (for he had not the least intention of speaking that day), and with a calmness and precision equal to any he had ever shown at any time, to place the law of his country upon several great and important points, and that, too, in such a manner as to force assent from those who are not willing to give it, is perhaps *un trait unique* in the history of the human mind.*

The public tranquillity seems now perfectly re-established, yet I still suspect there is a strong latent wish to disturb it again. Whether we shall ever be able to trace this conspiracy to its source, I know not. That the evil was not accidental, but has a root, and a deep and foul one too, I firmly believe. Adieu, dear Sir. I repeat my sincerest thanks for all your partiality and friendship, and ever am

Your most faithful, humble servant,

STORMONT.

* The sentiments of Lord Mansfield (whose opinion has ever since been regarded as constitutional law) claim the utmost attention, and the consideration of his years and sufferings in the late tumults, added to the interest with which he was regarded. In proffering his opinion (which accurately illustrated the question, and disembarrassed it from all previous doubts) he avowed that he had formed it without having recourse to books; adding the pathetic exclamation, "*Indeed I have no books to consult!*" All his auditors seemed to deplore the loss he had sustained as a national misfortune and disgrace.

MRS. MONTAGU* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

August 25th, 1780.

SIR,

I am afraid that since the time of Ulysses, to this very day, though a long interval, there have not been many travellers whose object it has been to see cities and men, with that attentive observation which could render them worthy to be introduced to the acquaintance of the most distinguished men, and to an advantageous recommendation to the most august cities. However, if I had not been convinced that Mr. Meeke had the best views in his travels, I should not have encouraged his going to Vienna, and less still should have made it my request to Sir Robert Keith to have afforded him the great honour and advantage of his protection and countenance. What does Mr. Meeke more honour than my good opinion, is that of the University of Cambridge, where he was educated; who, hearing his intention to go abroad, without his solicitation, conferred on him what is called a travelling fellowship; by which it is plain they think him not only capable of improving himself by travel, but of bringing home some addition to the public stock of learning and knowledge. I hope, therefore, to be excused the liberty I have taken, in giving him this address to your Excellency.

I must confess that I envy one who is going to visit Vienna. Where can one see a man who is as great when he lays aside his title of emperor, as when he

* Mrs. Montagu, whose defence of Shakespeare against the aspersions of Voltaire, and other productions, gave her for many years a high literary reputation. Being present at the French Academy at the reading of the invective, "bearing (says Walpole) all the marks of passionate dotage," and being asked by another French academician (Suard) whether what she had listened to had not given her some pain, she wittily replied, "By no means, as Monsieur de Voltaire is no friend of mine."

appears under that august title? and a woman, as good while she exercises imperial power, as those you read of in the histories of pious saints and spotless matrons? Their Imperial Majesties are determined to show, that their personal merit renders them superior to the highest elevation the institutions of this world can bestow.

If there should be any commands in London that I can execute, I beg you will intrust me with them. If you think any of our new publications worth your attention, I shall be happy to show on that, or any occasion, with what regard

I am your Excellency's
Most obedient and most humble servant,
ELIZABETH MONTAGU.

As a *pendant*, or, rather, contrast, to this somewhat *pedantic* epistle, from the original leader of the *Blue Stocking coterie*, may be given another celebrated correspondent's more feminine communication :—

MRS. PIOZZI TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

SIR, *London*, 1780.

It shocks me to be troublesome to you about such trifles; but the people of the custom-house at Franckenmark, seized some furs of mine, which, though old and much worn, were of particular value to me, because they were my mother's. They took, at the same time, a satin gown, half made up, some crape, to make me a cap on the road, and three hanks of thread, that my maid worked with. For this offence, Mr. Piozzi paid fifteen zechins. Mr. Piozzi hoped to have at least his money restored, but I believe that too is *contraband*, for the Abbé Trenti writes us word, that without the goods, we cannot see the guineas. The former, we hear, are detained at the frontiers, for want of an ambassador's

protection. I therefore take the liberty to beg for the honour of your instructions; what we ought to do what we ought to hope, and what we ought to pay, for having carried to Vienna an old fur petticoat, purchased in this town just thirty years ago, and half worn out before it came into the possession of, Sir,

Your very obedient and very humble servant,

HESTER PIOZZI.

MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR ROBERT, *Park Place, 30th Aug.*, 1780.

I had so long and kind a letter, so deserving of my utmost thanks and attention, that I feel myself the most idle and ungrateful of wretches, in having made no answer to it. You desire me in it to write soon, and often! You see I am fair in stating my delinquency, nay, I will go farther, and state the whole of it; 'tis a punishment I deserve! The Parliament sat indeed an endless time, and was a very troublesome one—but it has long been over, and I have as little to plead in my favour as possible. The only shred I can find to cover my shame, is drawn from your own letter, where I find a confession of similar delinquency. I have owned, and again own my fault however, and though I remind you of this, I do not mean to excuse myself, or accuse you; but 'tis my last poor *redoubt*, from whence I do not dream of defending myself, but barely to hope for terms, such as your generosity may grant; and pray give me that consolation soon.

You say a thousand true and excellent things upon the state of political affairs in our unhappy country. I feel as you do, the utility and necessity of all kinds of peace, *mais le moyen?* To be "angry and sin not," is of all, I believe, the hardest lesson among men. You say "Parliament should correct faults and punish

crimes:" but that "peace at home is necessary, to make vigorous war, or procure peace abroad." True —but how to correct faults, or punish crimes, and yet keep peace at home? Opposers say, "the country is undoing daily by bad measures;" supporters say, "do not obstruct the operations of government." If a doctor ordered poison to his patient, or a surgeon proposed a fatal amputation, and they were to say, "Hush! let us alone! don't disturb us in our measures, and all will go well"—must the poor patient die for peace' sake? I myself am but a miserable tame politician, contemned by the warm and vigorous ones for that sneaking vice called candour. Yet I really have, I think, seen an unjust and unnatural war, unnecessarily begun, obstinately persevered in, and very miserably conducted. I could not quite have the optimism of the good *Candide*, and say all was for the best! Yet opposition is *faction* in all its shapes! to find fault is to discompose, and indeed it does so; for those you find fault with are angry, if you are not. There is, it would seem, no differing without squabbling, nor finding fault without giving offence; and the dilemma of peaceably-disposed and unambitious men is sometimes great, in certain situations.

I certainly, in my little sphere, have blamed sometimes; because I have thought that to make Parliament a mere register of ministerial decrees, or simply the banker of the nation, and make no distinction between right and wrong, was of two evils the greatest. But I have neither promoted county meetings, nor mad associations, nor signed petitions, nor remonstrances; nor been for botching the constitution by short parliaments, and equal representation. I see defects in our constitution, which is an excellent piece of patchwork, but I don't know how to mend them. The Parliament, I am afraid, would not if they could,

unless they are mended themselves; and *I dread the heavy hand of the people in such operations.* What I have been most hurt at was to hear constantly those who were supporting those parliamentary measures by which the war was begun and continued, as freely condemning them out of the house, in all conversations, as they who opposed them; and that could not but be mortifying and provoking to one, who thought his vote and conduct in Parliament a serious duty, not a mere farce, and who thought he saw from the first day, all the horrors and dangers of this unfortunate war, and believed they might have been avoided. My prophecies are upon record; facts have too fatally verified them; and I can only say that having little ambition, and a very simple zeal for the prosperity of my country, I most cordially wish I had been as much in the wrong, as I certainly was in the right.*

We have lost three islands, and, I doubt, thirteen provinces. I wish Ireland may be as secure to the dominion of this country, as those provinces might have been; and after spending sixty or seventy millions, I doubt we are now evidently struggling against a superior force, after contriving to shake off everything we could ever call our ally. I will dwell no longer on this odious subject. Providence or our better Genius may perhaps avert these evils. There is such a tide in the affairs of men, its refluxes are sometimes sudden and extraordinary, and of all things the most uncomfortable and unmanly is to despair!

I am, therefore, not for yielding dishonourably, but for more exertion, and so I have long been; and I

* "Marshal Conway (says Walpole) carried his motion for a pacification with America, by a majority of nineteen. His speech was full of wit, spirit, and severity; and Mr. Fox complimented him publicly on this second triumph, he having been the mover of the repeal of the Stamp Act."

must say for myself, and those I have oftenest agreed with, that though condemning the war, I have never opposed any of the means for carrying it on. I hear nothing of late of that mischievous madman, Lord George Gordon. Amidst some harm he has done, he may, perhaps, have the accidental merit of checking, by the absurdity of his insurrection, a *mobbish spirit of reformation*, which I think might have made our bad business worse.

Lady Ailesbury sends kindest regards.

Ever your faithful and affectionate,

H. S. C.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, October 14th, 1780.

WHAT the devil is the matter with Old England, my dear Andrew, that she has lost every grain of her ancient spirit and perseverance? The absurdities with which every paper has been filled since the arrival of General Dalrymple from New York, and the mean-spirited despondency which one half of our fellow-citizens display upon the least untoward accident, are to me constant sources of shame, as well as sorrow. I find it a hard matter to hold my head as high as I shall ever wish to hold it, amidst a score of foreign ministers who, (upon the faith of our own representation of the situation of our affairs) look upon the faithless Bourbons as the very lords of the ascendant. What have these Bourbons done? what are they about to do, which ought to give them a just claim to that ascendancy? We ourselves must continue for a length of time to *betray* our own cause, to dishearten our own fleets and armies, to *crouch* under a burden which our forefathers would have supported most manfully, ere it can be possible for such a nation as ours to lose its weight and consideration in Europe. Bitter foes and false friends,

have brought us, indeed, into imminent danger; but we have still a fair field before us, and a cause so manifestly just that if we are true to ourselves, Heaven will certainly assist us.

You see, my dear Andrew, by this solemn preamble, that I am stung to the quick by the last letters from England. I pray of you, therefore, to ransack all London, for such good news, or at least well-founded expectations, as may enable me to stem with honour the torrent of falsehood and presumption with which the Bourbons are preparing to overflow all Europe. I had almost said that in so doing you will render a service to the public; for my situation here makes the game I have to play of some importance. But at least you will render an essential service to an old and trusty friend who serves his country with a warm and assiduous zeal, which in these pusillanimous times is not without some share of merit.

I have read with great pleasure the list of new members of Parliament. No less than six or seven-and-twenty of my Vienna lads will sit in St. Stephen's chapel; and they, *I trust*, will strive strenuously and successfully to set old dame England upon her legs again. They will at least give her ladyship fair play, and not permit a parcel of ungrateful children to smother her with the cushions of her own feather bed.

Give me news of the brave Rodney; he has kept up the honour of our navy amidst a thousand dangers. Will not Darby give us a tight bout soon with that blustering and mongrel commander, D'Estaing? So Darby is going to victual Gibraltar! If so, they *must* meet. Adieu, my dear Andrew—a word, a *cheerful* word; it will be worth a king's ransom to yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, 1st Dec. 1780.

It is with sincere grief that I sit down to acquaint you, my dear Anne, with the very great loss this country has sustained by the death of the Empress Queen, which happened on the evening of the 29th November, and has thrown this whole monarchy into the deepest affliction. The Empress began to complain of a violent cold, attended with a cough and oppression in breathing about the 18th. No danger was apprehended for several days; but from the morning of Saturday last, all the symptoms became more alarming, and the disease was supposed to be a dropsy of the chest. The tender affection and care with which the Emperor and all the children of the imperial family attended their mother through her whole illness, were highly exemplary, and endeared them more and more to all the subjects of Austria. Her Imperial Majesty took the most affecting leave of them all, and continued to exert her benevolence and charity in a great many instances; and showed, to her last moments, that piety, fortitude, and resignation, which had so eminently distinguished her whole life. No sovereign was more justly, nor more universally regretted, though every person in these kingdoms is persuaded that all that is great and good is to be expected from her successor.

I need not tell my sisters how much I share in the general sorrow, nor that my hands are full of business at the commencement of a new reign, which must be an object of great attention to every Court in Europe.

The Empress's danger increased so rapidly, that I could not write to my private correspondents by my servant, whom I dispatched to England a few hours after her death. I am certain that the news will create

many painful feelings wherever it is carried. The body will be opened this morning, and we shall know the real name of the fatal disease; and the burial will be on Sunday evening. All public diversions will be suspended for the whole winter, and those young folks who thirsted after the pleasures of a long and gay carnival, will be greatly disappointed. For my part, I lose nothing by the suppression of public shows, and my only wish is to see my chosen friends in tolerable health. December 2nd.—The Empress's body has been opened, and the fatal disease appears to have been *induration of the lungs*, and suffocation, the consequences of excessive corpulence. The burial will take place to-morrow evening, and with less pomp than usual, according to *her last will*. Her humility has gone so far as to forbid every sort of funeral oration. She has thought of everything and every body in her testament; has made provision for her younger children, left pensions and tokens of remuneration to all her faithful servants, and ordered a month's pay extraordinary to be distributed to the whole army.

In short, my dear Anne, the late reign has left a most striking and edifying example. May the new one be equally glorious and less chequered by the vicissitudes of fortune! I have written so much during the last four days, that my fingers almost refuse to hold the pen. I have only to add my hearty service to all the sisterhood and Aunt Bab. I expect great things from America, if dissension does indeed display itself among the rebels. Adieu, my dear friend.

Ever yours most cordially,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, January 1st, 1781.

I BEGIN my new year by the most affectionate wishes for the happiness of the sisterhood, and aunt Bab.* Health and contentment be your constant companions, together with that relish of life which doubles all its enjoyments. I am well and hearty, notwithstanding such a load of business as few men could go through without assistance. My young secretary is full of docility and attention; but since the hour he came into my house, I have had such constant and indispensable occupation, that I have not been able to teach him the mechanical part of the profession; so that all his good will is of no avail to me. However, I never grudge trouble, when it can forward the public service; and my sisters will be glad to learn that I have in the full and most flattering approbation of *all* my superiors, repeated upon fifty occasions, and without reserve, the best reward of my labours which I can possibly desire. This I say with real gratitude towards my sovereign, and his confidential servants, who treat me with so much kindness and indulgence. The present situation of Europe, and particularly of Great Britain, calls for the zealous exertions of every honest man who holds a public employment; mine are both hearty and assiduous. May Heaven render them useful! So much by way of preface to a busy year; and, I hope, a prosperous one.

This capital is what it ought to be, after such a loss as the nation has sustained. We are employed in recapitulating the exemplary life of the deceased sovereign, in blessing her memory, and in following, with just encomiums, every wise and paternal step of her illustrious

* The nonagenarian sister of his father, before mentioned.

successor. He is a man of very superior abilities, joined to that unweared application to the duties of his high station, which are, to his subjects, sure pledges of the justice and beneficence of his reign.

I wish I could find time to tell you a few of the well authenticated anecdotes which relate to the Empress's death; as I am sure you would agree with me in thinking, that no Roman matron, or Romish saint, ever met her dissolution with *as much* calm fortitude as Maria-Theresa. One I must mention, as it will do good to the hearts of the sisterhood. From the moment that the Empress found herself in imminent danger, she seemed to forget the sufferings of a painful and deadly disease, and employed every minute in arranging the affairs of her kingdoms, in explaining her intentions relative to her family, her friends, her servants, and even her own interment. This she did with a presence of mind truly astonishing. After several days, in which her beneficence had had its full scope, she found such difficulty in breathing, that she could no longer enjoy a moment of rest or ease in bed. As she sat in her chair, she inclined her head back, and seemed inclined to slumber. One of her women arranged the cushions round her dying sovereign, and asked in a whisper, if her Majesty would compose herself to sleep? "No," said the Empress, (raising herself,) "I *could* sleep; but Death is too near; and I must not let him *steal upon me in that way*. I have been preparing for his approach these fifteen years, and I am resolved to look him in the face without fear or horror." And she did so; for she ordered her physician to give her notice aloud when death was at hand, and she employed her parting breath in thanking Heaven, and blessing her people, and her children. Peace be with her manes! She was a good-hearted, a generous and magnanimous Princess, as any one who ever did honour to her sex, and to humanity!

I am sure you thank me for this anecdote, which I give you for your private satisfaction, and that of my cronies, and *intimate friends*. God bless you all.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

Vienna, January 20th, 1781.

DEAR YORKE,

The knowledge I have of the essential good qualities both of your head and heart, prevented me from attributing your unusual silence to any other cause but that of your troublesome and tedious election business. I saw with *real satisfaction* the happy issue of it; and though I regret that the contest led you into such an enormous expense, yet I shall think the money well employed, if it has fixed your family interest in the county upon so solid a foundation, that no Jew or Christian Crœsus shall dare hereafter to attempt to overthrow it.

Your own character, my dear Yorke, and that kind attention which you will always be disposed to show to your constituents in their private concerns, will soon make you the friend of the county; and I know no situation in life more truly respectable, than that of an independent member of parliament, to whom a whole county looks up, not for dirty jobs, but for the candid and efficacious support of their just claims upon Government. May you long enjoy the pre-eminence of that situation, with every delightful feeling which belongs to a humane disposition, and a clear conscience!

In politics, I have long, in my own imagination, marked out your line, my dear Yorke. Truth, independence, and application will guide you through every step, till you arrive at that well-earned esteem and national consideration which enlarge the means of doing

good,* and are undoubtedly the most valuable prizes which a man of good sense and moderate ambition can ever wish to obtain. I would not see you at the head of the Treasury if I could; I love you too well to wish you ever to barter the heartfelt contentment and domestic happiness for which nature has formed you, for all the fame, and all the power of the most envied minister of state! I imagine that Sir Joseph Yorke will be in England before this reaches you. You know, my dear Yorke, from how many motives of attachment and gratitude I must ever take the warmest interest in all that concerns one who has honoured me with his friendship for more than four-and-twenty years. I have pitied his situation for the last twelve months, in a country from which integrity and gratitude seem to have taken their flight. I was prepared for many dirty tricks on the part of those mean-spirited and faithless republicans; but my idea of their turpitude did not go so far as the late instances of their folly and falsehood have shown that they *can* go. Sir Joseph has acted the part of a true friend to Holland, and to the Prince of Orange; it must gall him exceedingly to find that by words, and *unwearied* example, he has preached so long *in vain*. But he has his recompense in the testimony of his own conscience, and in the full approbation of the King, and the whole nation. May the fate which the Dutch deserve bring them soon back to a sense of their errors, and the hearty desire of repairing them, and may Sir Joseph be their political saviour!

Our Emperor has behaved like an angel ever since his accession, and shows such assiduity and superior talents in all the duties of his high station, that his subjects, and all Europe, may promise themselves much

* A prognostic fully realised, in the Chancellorship of the University of Cambridge, and Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland; offices discharged by the Earl of Hardwicke with the most universal approbation.

good from his reign. The first seven weeks of our mourning (which lasts six months) being over, we hope in a few days to be allowed to pay our court to him, for the first time since the lamented death of the Empress Queen; and I shall carry into his presence, along with the sincere good wishes of all the English nation, as much personal veneration and attachment* as any one of his subjects. Adieu, dear Yorke; honour and happiness attend you!

R. M. K.

[*Confidential.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, Jan. 13*th*, 1781.

Joy and comfort be with my excellent Drummonds, male and female, and with all the *Gang*, in this *lively* and *decisive* year, and in many following ones. I have no wishes more ardent than those I offer you all, and it grieved me to be obliged to send Wiffin to England two days ago without charging him with them. But, my dear Andrew, I am, and have been for several months past, the *veriest slave* that ever tugged at the political oar, and without *a soul to assist me.* How, and to what purpose I have rowed, let my superiors tell, and if I help to bring the vessel safely into port, no creature within the bounds of your blessed island will be happier, or more contented than myself. My superiors load me with kindness and commendation; they treat me with that confidence which marks sincere esteem; they reward me in the way of all others which is the best suited to my feelings and disposition; but as to *fortune,* my dear Andrew, I never cared much about it, and nobody else seems to bestow a thought upon what Keith's circumstances or his claims are. When I say *nobody*, I mean of those who hold the loaves and

* The feeling was mutual on the part of the Emperor Joseph, throughout his life.

fishes; for I know that my private friends, my chosen and trusty few, are more solicitous about my fortune than I am. But I will not tire you with grievances which I defy to disturb my peace of mind. I have my recompense in my own breast, and in those of my friends; and if the distributors of good things remain unmindful of an old and faithful servant, because he has too much honest pride to become a *teazing dun, tant pis pour eux!* they have worse hearts than mine, whatever their heads may be.

I am the busiest man in Christendom, and shall be the most contented, if the government put in execution their talked-of idea of sending my *fast friend* of upwards of thirty years, Sir Joseph Yorke, to help me in my negotiation. But when the time may come (if ever) for such an appointment, depends on the events of war, and the capricious, as well as insidious politics of our Bourbon enemies. Sir Joseph is one of the oldest and most intimate friends I have in the world, and his nomination would be to me the most *welcome* event; because I am certain that neither he, nor those who send him, will seek to suppress what little share of merit I can already justly claim on my own bottom. Thank God! there is not a more disinterested man in Great Britain than myself; but justice must be done to me, for the honour of the Clan Keith.*

Adieu, yours ever,

R. M. K.

* That honour could not be better promoted, nor the character of one of its most distinguished members better elucidated, than by this *confidential* expression of his *inmost sentiments* upon a point where a more selfish or interested person might have felt differently. The rumoured conjunction with him, in the negotiation for a general treaty, of Sir Joseph Yorke (rendered convenient and desirable from the peculiar intimacy of the latter with the intricate Dutch affairs), had been viewed by some of Sir Robert's friends (among others Marshal Conway, to whom it dictated two most affectionate and *brotherly* letters) with a sensitive feeling of jealousy on his behalf, from which it will be seen that he him-

MR. RIGBY* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Pay Office, Jan. 21*st*, 1781.

DEAR KEITH,

My porter tells me that your messenger arrived from Vienna on Thursday last, and returns to you in a few days. It would be unpardonable in me not to take this opportunity of a safe conveyance, though I have little perhaps to tell you. I hope this courier from you brings good tidings from the Emperor, of a friendly disposition to this country, which at this hour is in a state it never found itself before. I must begin by assuring you that since my friends Gower and

self was totally free; lest the honour to accrue from the successful termination of hostilities should be in any way shared by another. Lord Stormont, who from congenial delicacy of character seems always to have appreciated him, perfectly knew this when he wrote :—

[*Private.*] "*St. James's, March* 30*th*, 1781.

"I was *very sure* that his Majesty's intention of joining Sir Joseph Yorke in the future negotiation, would be *highly agreeable* to you. It is a great satisfaction to the King, if this great work does go on, that the business will be conducted by two ministers, who are so closely united in friendship, and who will vie with each other in talents, activity, and zeal. It has, of course, always been his Majesty's intention that you should both be on exactly the same footing, and have equal treatment in *all respects*. But neither of the appointments can take place until it is known that the Bourbon Courts have accepted the mediation."

That the idea was at the time relinquished, is matter of history; but Sir R. Keith's strenuous previous efforts were highly appreciated.

* Richard Rigby, Esq., Secretary to the Duke of Bedford, in Ireland, and afterwards paymaster to the forces. His convivial qualities, for which (as well as great readiness and spirit in debate) he was celebrated, are thus described by Mr. Wilkes :—"Mr. Rigby has generosity and spirit, he is an excellent *bon vivant*, amiable and engaging. Mr. Rigby has all the gifts, and gambols, and flashes of merriment which set the table in a roar, though the day after a cruel headache may succeed. I should like to spend all my days with Mr. Pitt, but I am afraid that at night I should often skulk to Mr. Rigby and his friends."—*Butler's Reminiscences.*

To the above, Mr. Rigby united the more sterling qualities of sound sense, great goodness of heart, and warmth in the service of his friends.

Weymouth withdrew themselves, and particularly since the death of poor Chamier, (which I can never enough lament,) I have not been in habits enough with any of the King's servants to know more of their secrets than I do of those of the ministers at the Court of Vienna. I don't covet the contrary; preferring the situation of an *unresponsible* paymaster to any other I could have under existing circumstances.

Our new Parliament, from the little specimen we have yet had of it, seems at least as well disposed to support government as the last. Not that I think them over fond of the ministers; but that numbers of them detest the opposition. This party, perhaps the most respectable one in this kingdom at present, and which is a very numerous one, I call the opposition to the opposition; who despise the ministers, but hate and detest their antagonists; and by their strength and support this ministry stands, and bids fair to remain; more especially, as added to this circumstance, the opposition are split and divided amongst one another to such a degree, that Shelburne and Burke keep no bounds in their abuse of each other. Nor even do the Rockingham party hold the same doctrine upon the material article to be brought into Parliament from the Yorkshire committee, of shortening the duration of Parliaments, and introducing one hundred new knights, for *counties*. Sir George Savile is to go those lengths: Lord Rockingham and Burke hold back. These circumstances will explain to you the present state of those parties. As to the ministers, they remain, as usual, totally unconnected with each other, depending and relying wholly upon our royal master. The Chancellor grumbles and goes on. Wedderburn begins to grow impatient with his inactive situation of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and with the smallness of its income, not sufficient, it seems, to support the

splendour of nobility. We have not seen the Advocate* this session; and I hear he has been too ill to come from Scotland yet. In a full House, and a warm debate, we shall have occasion for his eloquence and spirit! I live much, and in great cordiality with the Drummonds, who are the best people in the world. I tell Bob he is of the party I describe, as opposition to the opposition, which is his case. Harry is a better courtier, for he has one of the best contracts that ever man had, and I rejoice that it is so.†

I imagine we are not likely to see you soon at home. I own, without flattery to you, that I am very glad you happen to be at this time at the Emperor's ‡ Court. I am not politician enough to know if it is in his power, should it be his inclination, to step forth a friend to Great Britain; I only know that we want him. Whether news is come from Petersburgh, or whether it be favourable or hostile, you are much more likely to know than I am; as well as whether we have friends enough left in Holland to persuade the Dutch to cry *peccavi*, as some people report is the case.

Jan. 29th.

Since I began this letter, the King's message has been sent to both Houses, notifying the Dutch war; and 101 members of the House of Commons, together with a few peers, have condemned the measure. What passed in the House of Lords confirms my account of the state of parties; for Shelburne and Camden affectedly disclaimed all political connection with any party or parties whatsoever.

Our fleet is to sail for the relief of Gibraltar

* H. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville.

† This lucrative contract the Messrs. Drummond resigned, that their parliamentary conduct might be *unfettered*.

‡ Joseph the Second, whose recent accession rendered his sentiments extremely important.

immediately. I wish for a sea-fight, even at a disadvantage of numbers; for nothing puts the people of this country so much (nor in my opinion so justly) out of humour, as these inactive naval campaigns. I can't help telling you that your friend Wraxall spoke incomparably well in the debate on the Dutch war. He had matter enough for a *dozen speeches*, good elocution, with a tolerable voice. But he gave the House *too much*; for he has not sat there long enough yet to know that knowledge and good sense don't make their way so well in that place as confidence and abuse.*

And now, my dear Keith, after thanking you a thousand times again for all your goodness to my nephew, you will be pleased to hear that I am very well satisfied with him. He is a well-bred, good-humoured, pleasant gentleman, as free from vice as I could wish to see him. He never games, the rock upon which all the young men of fashion split and are cast away. I allow him 1000*l.* a-year; he comes and goes to Mistley as he pleases; in short, we are on the best terms. Excuse, if I bore you about him. Yours, ever,

RICHARD RIGBY.

* Wraxall, whose *début* is thus leniently, if not favourably mentioned here, is said by later correspondents to have utterly disgusted the House by the lengthiness and wide range of topics embraced in his speeches. Their reception, and discursive nature, are thus characterised in one of the wittiest of the *jeux d'esprit* called "Probationary Odes," in which the matter and manner of the speakers of the day are held up to ridicule:—

"Murrain seize the House of Commons!
Hoarse catarrh their wind-pipes shake,
Who, deaf to troubled learning's summons,
Rudely coughed whene'er I spake,
* * * * * * *
I burn, I burn, I glow, I glow,
With antique and with modern lore;
I rush from Bosphorus to Po,
From Nilus to the Nore!"

It has been mentioned, that though a lively narrator in point and in

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ., ON HIS MARRIAGE.

Vienna, May 12th, 1781.

SHE is the very woman! the handsome, untainted, warm-hearted woman I had so long marked out in my own mind for you; and you are the happiest man in Christendom, my dear Andrew; and you will be long so, because both you and sweet Lady Mary* have right heads, as well as warm hearts. You are both made for domestic happiness—you know its value—you have a competency and fair prospects, and your blood has not an icy particle in it! *Ergo*, my young friends Andrew and Mary shall be as happy as the day is long; and, Heaven knows, I not only applaud but share their happiness.

I congratulate Bob and Tatty, and Bess and Harry, and Lady Egmont, and your bride, and *myself!* Why did you not tell me the precise day of your nuptials, my sweet boy Andrew, that I might have made it a holiday in my household? Every living creature would have celebrated it with joy, for every body loves *Dru, dru*, and sends a million of wishes. The Thun is delighted with your marriage—so *are all;* the Pergen says you are such a husband as she wishes for her daughters; the Hoyos whispers, "que Lady Mary *est une femme fort heureuse!*"

Here comes a d—d fellow with a long paper, which I *must* read. Lord! Andrew! let no *child* of yours ever be bred a politician; it is all buckram and stay-tape, and not one man in a hundred knows the true secret of the trade. I will tell it you in two words—be honest, discreet, and active; prove to mankind they

conversation, his letters are too common-place to have afforded room (with one exception) even for extract here.

* Daughter to the Earl of Egmont.

may trust you, and they will! My politician grows impatient: I *must* throw down the pen; but first let me embrace the clan Drummond, *including* Lady Mary, with whom I have been in *love* these *six* years! Write to me, you dog, or I shall—pay my devoirs to her ladyship *in person.* And now to the business of Europe! Yours ever,

R. M. K.

The patriotic disinterestedness with which, while sympathising with the "hopes deferred" of his "six-and-eightpenny" brother veterans, Sir R. M. Keith was content to wait nearly twenty years for another regiment (his own having been disbanded in 1763), was amply rewarded by the terms in which official and private friends hailed the tardy appointment. His principal thus notifies it:—

LORD STORMONT* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, Oct. 12th, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I have no matter for an official letter to-day; but I cannot omit the earliest opportunity of congratulating you upon the distinguished mark of his Majesty's favour just conferred upon you, by appointing you to the command of the 10th regiment, vacant by the death of General Sandford, the news of whose death arrived only *the day before yesterday.* This event must give the warmest pleasure to all your friends, but to none more than to your most faithful humble servant,

STORMONT.

Lord Frederick Campbell thus writes on the occasion:

"This post has given me the greatest pleasure imaginable. How I rejoice to hear, my dear Sir Robert

* Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Keith, that you are *at last* at the head of an *old* regiment, and in Great Britain! Though the dogs will insist on having breeches, (which was not always the case,) yet Snip may cover your myrmidons well, and not suffer the colonel to be a loser. I hope now to live long enough to see you rich, your estate improving, and yourself one of the happiest of creatures, *at home*. Lady Frederick joins me in many a good wish and heartfelt congratulation on the present occasion.

"Yours, my dear Sir Robert, most faithfully,

"F. C."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, Nov. 3rd, 1781.

My best thanks to you, my dear Andrew, for your hearty congratulations upon an event which was equally necessary in point of finance and of comfort. The value of this favour has been greatly enhanced by the very gracious expressions which accompanied my nomination, and the very friendly part which Lord Stormont and Lord Amherst took in what concerned me. I know how all my Drummonds feel on the occasion, and my gratitude is quite *at home* among them. I cannot add a grain to my zeal for the public service: it has long been carried to the utmost pitch of my abilities; but I shall seize with double pleasure every opportunity that may present itself of acquitting a part of the debt I owe to my country. She had need of more successful servants than I am; but I defy her to have any one more assiduously or more cheerfully active than I am in every possible exertion. So much for self—now for public news. I hate all those indecisive actions, like this last, off the Chesapeak; and I pray Heaven that Digby, with his reinforcement, may have determined our fleet to make another and speedy attack upon de

Grasse; else I shall be greatly in pain for brave Lord Cornwallis. I am glad of Johnston's capture, for his sake, and for the effect it will produce at Amsterdam; and the arrival of so large and rich a fleet of East Indiamen will no doubt be a well-timed support to the Company and the national credit. But it is not *money* we want (you see I speak like the colonel of an *old* regiment), but *blood* for our money (as John Bull used to say); for how the devil do you think we can make a *peace* for you till you have shown that you can make war in the *old British style?*

Yours, R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, Feb. 27th, 1782.

THE winds and weather are against us, and to the most vexatious degree of obstinacy, and Heaven knows what is going on in Old England since the 5th of February! The loss of the English mails of the 1st, has put me in a blessed humour, but you would like me worse if I bore it with more philosophy. The only piece of good news I have heard is, that Guichen had not sailed from Brest on the 10th instant. This will give our brave Rodney a month's start of the Bourbons, and I trust he will make a *decisive* use of it. If this year deceives my expectations, I fly to the convent upon the top of the Calenberg, from which the useless monks are to be *sent away*, and it will make a noble retirement for a disappointed politician, who will have had a surfeit of his troublesome and fruitless trade.

Before I withdraw to my hill, I am, however, resolved to gaze with all my eyes at the strangest of all sights, the Pope of Rome in the streets of Vienna! His Holiness seems to add to the fervent zeal of an officious missionary, a certain share of holy *obstinacy*, which induces him to carry this strange project into execution

against much good advice, and the frank declaration that his eloquence *must* prove ineffectual. He will be with us soon after Easter; but if he will appear in his own, or in a questionable shape, is not yet known. I shall behave to him as the most civil and well-bred of all *heretics;* and if any relation of yours has any private request to put to his Holiness, I think I can promise you its success. If you and Lady Mary stand in need of the Pope's blessing, say the word, and you shall be blessed accordingly. Joking apart, there never was so singular an event as this pilgrimage, and you may be assured that it will take place. May it breed no ill-will or mischief!

Why will not you and Lady Mary take a trip to the continent, and come and see your trusty friends at Vienna? You are well assured that you would be made as heartily welcome here as in any city in Christendom. I have some English dames here already, who go very pleasantly on. Lady Derby, and Mrs. Campbell; Mrs. Hamilton, and Miss ——; these last belong to the heir of Abercorn, who is a sensible and agreeable lad. I have my sweet Lord St. Asaph, and Lords Morton and Bread-albane, all of whom will do honour to the peerage. But never more shall I have such a colony as that you saw here. My love to every one of them that come in your way.

What are they going to do with my regiment? where are they going to send it? I give my ready consent to any place except the cursed Sugar Islands, the climate of which makes me shudder. But I know nothing about regiments or anything else. I am a famished plenipo, and know no more about English matters than the Pope's coachman, who is now greasing his boots for the German journey. Tell me every scrap of news, and *quickly.* Yours,

R. M. K.

[*Private.*]

LORD STORMONT * TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, March 27th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

I cannot content myself with writing you a mere official letter upon this occasion. Your own observation upon some late events will have led you to expect the revolution which took place *to-day*, and which, I think, will long be memorable in the annals of this country.† I shall not, especially in a letter by the common post, hazard any opinion, either upon the causes or consequences of this revolution.

As to what relates to myself, I have the highest reason to be pleased with the distinguished marks of approbation with which his Majesty deigned to honour me, when I was to resign the seals. He spoke of my endeavours in his service, in such flattering terms as I cannot allow myself to repeat. Before I entered upon my late employment, his goodness had placed me in such a situation that I had nothing to ask or desire, but the continuance of his favourable opinion.

I cannot doubt that my successor will do the same justice I ever did, to your distinguished zeal, ability, and talents, which his Majesty frequently mentions, and always in terms of the highest approbation. Will you be so good as to take a proper opportunity of presenting my best respects to Prince Kaunitz, and of repeating my thanks for the very obliging manner in which he has often spoken of me to you. I shall ever remember it with equal gratitude and pride. Nothing can be so flattering to me as the approbation of a man who is at once the object of my highest veneration and

* Sir R. M. Keith's predecessor at Vienna ; and up to this day his Principal in the Foreign Office. † The change of ministry.

tenderest attachment. Adieu, dear Sir. I shall hope often to hear from you, and ever am, with the sincerest regard, your most faithful, and humble servant,

STORMONT.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, April 3rd, 1782.

I AM in a blessed situation at this very moment, not knowing who is, or may be a week hence, minister of England. Every body questions me about English news, and I am ashamed to own that I am as much in the dark as they can be. Let us but have an *efficient* and a *vigorous* ministry, my dear Andrew; whether my friends, or the men I have seen in opposition to all their measures, provided Old England is a clear and permanent gainer by the change. Let us but save the honour and interests, the dearest interests of the country that bred us; and let me be placed in the most obscure corner of it, I care not a button.

Next post *must* bring me at least a ray of certain daylight. The total ignorance in which I live is painful beyond measure; and at the same time the little remnant of consideration amongst foreign nations we still had, is lost by this shilly-shally business. May Rodney and Hood be doing something manly in the West Indies, whilst the sons of Britain are worrying one another at home. We are our own most dangerous enemies, that is certain. I sent home to-day by estafette some very good news which came overland from India. We receive more political and *soi-disant* patriotic nonsense in one week from England, than would serve us sober Germans for a twelvemonth.

We are preparing for the second visit of the Russian Princes, and shall show them such an army as eyes never saw, and clever Italian operas into the bargain.

Will this not tempt you out of your turbulent island? And yet, I am sure, the madness of the times must make it almost *uninhabitable.*

You know the Pope has been here these twelve days. He is a comely, venerable, and affable old man as ever I saw. I paid him a visit in his *closet*, without committing my public character, and he received me as if I had been the ambassador of a Catholic crowned head. I never saw any man have a more becoming public deportment, and his public functions at the high pontifical mass at the cathedral, on Easter Sunday, and afterwards, when he gave his benediction to the public, in the great square opposite the Jesuits' church, were truly edifying. Yet I trust, my dear Andrew (this to yourself alone), that he will carry away, when he leaves us, a fortnight hence, the highest opinion of the Emperor's hospitality, together with the conviction that no prince in Europe possesses better or more steady principles.

I send you inclosed, a small print of him, pretty like; though he is handsomer, and of a tall, fine, manly figure. Present it to your mother, with my best compliments.

Yours, ever affectionately,

R. M. KEITH.

It was not to be supposed that an event so unprecedented as the journey of Pope Pius VI. to Vienna should not find a place in the correspondence, from that usually monotonous city, of Sir R. Murray Keith. His notices of it, however, and of his personal interview with the pontiff, being, though graphic, as usual, rather brief—it may not be irrelevant (at a time especially when the papacy, from the accession to it of another Pius, equally energetic, though far wiser than his brilliant, egotistical predecessor, occupies more than its usual share in the attention of Europe) to compress, from the amusing pages of a French memoir

writer, some of the leading motions and incidents of what Sir Robert so justly designates—a "singular pilgrimage:"

"John Angelo Braschi, though his talents and activity were admitted during the life of his patrons, Ganganelli and Clement XIII., owed his elevation to the pontificate (like his modern namesake, and several of their most distinguished predecessors) chiefly to the idea of his absence of all pretension to it, and to the factions in the conclave, which forbade unanimity in favour of any one of the declared candidates.

"He was not, at first, popular, though endowed (according to the character drawn of him by no partial hand) with the precise qualities which usually constitute a popular sovereign; showy talents, a fine commanding person, dignified manners, easy and flowing elocution, as enlarged a mind as could consist with the rigid principles of his vocation, and a tolerably enlightened taste for the fine arts.

"Impatient, irascible, obstinate, and open to prejudices, he yet never showed himself perseveringly vindictive or intentionally unjust. In less difficult circumstances, and with means proportioned to his views, he might perhaps have passed for a wise ruler. But he had an excessive passion for fame, which proved the principal source of his errors and misfortunes; such a craving for renown as, when not united to strength of mind, is apt to degenerate into puerile vanity. It was his paramount desire to immortalise his pontificate, and associate his own name with brilliant undertakings; and his self-love, thus prominently brought forward, drew on him frequent mortifications.

"Sprung from a family scarcely noble, he laid himself open from the time of his accession, by attempts to illustrate his race, to the pasquinades of those most pitiless of mockers, the Italian populace. To the *two*

winds, which constituted his sole (and surely singular) family arms, he had added an eagle, fleur-de-lys, and stars. This pompous escutcheon was thus mercilessly analysed by his wit-loving subjects:—

> Redde aquilam imperio, Francorum lilia regi,
> Sidera redde polo; cætera, Braschi, tua.*

"The erection of the tasteless though costly sacristy of St. Peter's drew down upon him more of those popular philippics. Not only was the remark applied to it made by Apelles on a contemporary painter's Venus, that, not being able to make her beautiful, he had at least made her fine; but on the principal front which bore the inscription—'What the *public voice* called for as an ornament to the Vatican, the sovereign pontiff, Pius VI., has undertaken and accomplished,'—was found subjoined this indignant contradiction:—

> Publica! mentiris. Non publica vota fuêre,
> Sed tumida ingenii vota fuêre tui.
>
> Thou liest! the public wish was never consulted,
> Thy only counsellor was thine own vanity."†

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* Restore the eagle to the empire, to France her lilies, the stars to the heavens; the residue, Braschi, is thine own.

If the perpetuation of those arms, and of his own name, a thousand times repeated, on every monument in whose erection or repair he had the slightest share (at the cost, it is said, of 200,000 Roman crowns) was an object worthy of prosecution, it is attained; and while Rome itself stands, the name of *Pius Sixtus* will exist with it.

† Whatever of truth, however, may reside in the epigram, and however dearly the *Popolo Romano*, so often pompously invoked and mercilessly fleeced, may have paid for his munificence, the traveller at least will bless the memory of him who collected and displayed for his benefit the treasures of the Vatican.

Two other of the squibs called forth by his restorations and their consequences, may amuse the modern visitor to Rome. When he had raised, at an excessive expense, the obelisk on Monte Cavallo, in a season of scarcity, public opinion manifested itself in the text from Scripture, "Command that these stones be made bread."

At another period of famine, when the vain-glorious inscriptions,

If to this overweening desire of admiration and distinction, we add the rare personal advantages which contributed to foster it, we shall not be at a loss for human motives (apart from his really sincere, though mistaken hope of arresting by his eloquence and influence the ecclesiastical reforms of the Emperor Joseph) for Pius VI.'s ill-advised journey to Vienna. "He was," says the writer already quoted, (a *liberal*, be it noted, of the true French school), "one of the handsomest men of his time. He united a tall, striking figure, features equally noble and pleasing, and a brilliant complexion, which age had hardly been able to impair. His forehead was entirely bald, but round the back and at the sides of his fine head clustered an ample circlet of snow-white locks, which, skilfully arranged, gave him an aspect at once grand and venerable. He had the art of so disposing his pontifical garments as to lose none of his personal advantages. Having as fine a leg as any man in Italy, of which he was very vain, and which was always (to borrow an untranslaetable French phrase) *parfaitement bien chaussé*—it was his custom to hold up his long robes, so as perfectly to display at least one of his handsome limbs. And though these puerile affections, so little worthy of a grave pontiff, together with his care of his flowing curls, laid him open to another very indifferent, yet significant lampoon—yet nothing could, in fact, be more imposing than to see him on high festivals, his head encircled with the triple crown, robed in vestments of spotless white, set off by contrast with the Roman purple, soaring as it were above the crowd of ecclesiastics of all ranks, and seeming thus to proclaim and assert his domination over the

meeting the eye at every corner of Rome, were viewed in irritating contrast with the enormous price of bread—there was placed in the hand of Pasquin, the most diminutive of rolls, labelled "*Munificentiâ Pii Sixti.*"

Universal Church. However humiliating and unworthy of rational beings" (adds the writer, in a spirit which even those more friendly to religion than himself can echo,) "this homage to a fellow-mortal must appear—yet persons least susceptible of similar impressions could not resist the effect of the splendour and solemnity surrounding the throne of St. Peter, while occupied by the magnificent-looking Pius VI."

Furnished by nature with these requisites, (admirably calculated, it must be confessed, to dazzle and subdue), it was in vain that his ablest counsellors, and few but candid and attached friends, endeavoured to dissuade him from prostituting them, in the vain hope of diverting from his headlong course of innovation the no less obstinate and self-willed Joseph II. They felt the dignity of the Church, as well as its waning influence, compromised by a degrading complaisance, which formed so humiliating a contrast with the submission exacted in former times from Emperors by the Pope. And while honest regard for that Church's interests called forth the regrets of even the most obedient and least penetrating members of the Sacred College, (though seven of them, separately consulted, were found to sanction the measure,) the astute and worldly-minded Cardinal Bernis was in despair* at the thoughts of seeing a man whom he really liked and cared for, rushing on the Scylla of the rocky inflexibility of Joseph on the one hand, or the Charybdis of undisguised ridicule and contumely from his sceptical and sneering prime minister on the other.

Had even the disposition of either been more pliable, or their unalterable determination less openly avowed, an ill-judged previous step on the part of the pontiff (however insignificant perhaps in itself, in the eyes of a man like Joseph) had nevertheless mingled somewhat of

* He concluded his last note of pathetic friendly dissuasion in the words of the Psalmist, "Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem."

personal pique in the elements of his resistance. With a degree of infatuation difficult to conceive, at a period when in Maria-Theresa Rome had lost almost her last steady friend—the Pope denied to that most Catholic of sovereigns the funeral service accorded in his chapel to all reigning monarchs; as if a princess, who had for twenty years ruled alone, and for more than that period swayed the destinies of Europe, was to be reduced, by a papal slight, to the level of the nameless queens of tributary kings! The correspondence which passed on the subject was not calculated to soften the affront. The papal legate at Vienna having remonstrated, Pius, in a moment of ill-humour, replied: "It matters little to me whether the Emperor takes amiss this act of mine, or despises it." Joseph, for once, preferred the former alternative, and added with his own hand to the next dispatch for Rome laid before him for signature, "It matters not at all to me whether the Bishop of Rome be well or ill-bred;" thus flattering himself he had avenged his mother's ashes. Henceforward, although more suitable obsequies would no doubt have failed to arrest his reforms, they were pursued with less of outward deference; and a lurking *spite* mingled in all the attacks with which he plied the Holy See.

Here it is scarcely possible to avoid quoting (for a very different and more sacred purpose than that of lauding or depreciating a fallible mortal) the singular coincidence of the undesigned testimony of a French sceptical historian to a state of things scripturally descriptive of the later condition of the modern Babylon:

"The Pope appeared," he says, "at this epoch (1781) an object of compassion. *Almost all the sovereigns of Europe seemed to have come to an agreement to torment and molest him.*" And while this was the case with all the monarchies hitherto devoted to the papacy, France, strange to say—the one destined ere long to renounce not only that of

Rome, but all spiritual authority, and to drag into captivity the very pontiff himself—was at this period, through the lingering influence of Cardiual de Bernis, his apparently sole ally. But we must hasten from this irresistible digression, to the memorable journey to Vienna.

A decree, only equalled in sweeping comprehensiveness by that of the Inquisition, which condemned by anticipation all the works Voltaire might *hereafter write*, was issued by the Emperor, obliging the bishops in his dominions to take an oath to acquiesce in all edicts already issued, or *hereafter to be issued* by him. This, (fruitlessly remonstrated against by letter) and the decree immediately following, throwing open the gates of all convents not dedicated to educational purposes, stimulated the Pope to take a step equally unexpected and undesired at Vienna as at Rome. Having conceived the hope of converting and enlightening the Emperor, it was in vain (as has been said) that he was dissuaded from the measure, by all who dared to lay before him its flagrant impropriety and impolicy.

Joseph, who had been advised against the reception of the visit, lest it should revive the fanaticism against which he was waging war, despised the danger, as he had done many others, and writing an *affectionate* (though perfectly intelligible) reply to this unheard-of proposal, seems to have felt a sort of bear-like satisfaction in stifling with honours and caresses the man whose humiliation he enjoyed, and whose every view in making the journey he was resolved to disappoint. What share the prostrations of former Cæsars at the feet of former Popes may have had in the pleasure derived by their descendants from the reverse of the medal, may be left to the reader's imagination.*

We pass over for want of space and time, the pompous

* "Pius the Sixth (says the author so often quoted) who was far from the inheritor of their tyranny, now expiated the insolence of his pre-

reception (overshadowed here and there by symptoms of contagious contumacy) and almost divine honours, from the Catholic populations on his route, which attended Pius on his progress through Italy to Germany. But as Mordecai at the king's gate, amid the triumphs of Haman (we mean only, of course, as to its ominous import to one bound on a far different and really beneficent errand), must have been the first circumstance which greeted the pontiff on the Imperial territory; viz., the summons to Vienna, the angry rebuke, and heavy fine inflicted there on a prelate, who had presumed to prefer the Pope's commands to those of the Emperor; and the selection by the latter of three Hungarian nobles to *receive the head of the national Church,* from among the three tolerated, and thus equalised denominations, of Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist!

The reader will probably prefer the account given from ocular demonstration by the British Ambassador (in a letter to his sister) of the joint entry of the Pope and Emperor, to the more florid and *French* version of it of the memoir writer.

Sir Robert thus writes:—

"*Vienna, March 24th,* 1782.

"On Friday afternoon, I witnessed one of the most extraordinary sights which this age has afforded, and which could not fail to make a strong impression on the mind of every man who has the history of former times fresh in his memory.* I saw the Pope and the Emperor seated in the same chariot, and driving slowly to the imperial palace, through an immense crowd of quiet and

decessors; while Joseph the Second, under the exterior of urbanity, avenged the insult once offered to his own."

* This was so especially the case with the writer, and so universal was his acquaintance with history, that in an intellectual game (which he either invented or brought into fashion) it was found impossible to baffle him, by selecting the least known or most recondite historical events.

respectable citizens, happy in expressing their veneration for the head of their Church, without any mixture of blind superstition, and their warm attachment to their beneficent sovereign, untainted with a grain of servile fear. Such a meeting would, a few centuries ago, have been the signal for a crusade, or some religious massacre. Even an hundred years ago, it would have foreboded some dangerous contestation; whereas I really hope that at present, it will be productive of two great benefits; the extension of universal benevolence and toleration; and the confirmation of the dearest rights of the subjects of this monarchy. The Emperor had gone four posts to meet the Pope upon the high road. When the two carriages came abreast, each of the sovereigns stepped out, and after the most cordial welcome, the Emperor handed the Holy Father into his own chariot, and returned to Vienna.*

"The Pope is a comely, venerable, and healthy-looking man of sixty years. His manners are affable and becoming. He receives the gentlemen with little ceremony, and speaks French to those who are not masters of Italian. The chapel of the palace was full of ladies, when Te Deum was sung on his arrival; but he sat in a close pew, and spoke to none of them. The papal etiquette will not permit him to see ladies in the Imperial palace, where he is lodged; but he will appoint a day of female presentation in the library, or at the palace in the suburbs, called the Belvedere. I shall pay my respects to him somehow, though not as the *British Minister*. We believe he will stay here about three weeks, and that all his eloquence will certainly not shake any of the Emperor's humane resolutions for the good of his people; but he will have every possible reason to be

* So studious was Joseph of external courtesy and the deference due to the character of the pontiff, that (says the memoir writer) he seated him on his *right* hand.

satisfied with the respect paid to him, and with the cordial hospitality of the Emperor. He has no Cardinals in his suite, but four or five mean-looking bishops and ecclesiastics. He said mass this morning very privately in the Capuchin convent, but will officiate pontifically on Easter Sunday, and afterwards give his *papal benediction* to the people, from a balcony in the largest square in the city."

Those who have witnessed the striking and solemn effect which the latter ceremony is capable of producing (and not altogether, as the memoir writer observes, on Catholics *alone*) at Rome, where long repetition has rendered it familiar—will easily give credit to the sensation described by him which it excited for the first time in Vienna. The devotion, indeed, of the Catholic public of Austria was such as to indemnify its object for other secret disappointments. "The eagerness of the common people to receive his benediction amounted (says our author) to frenzy. The course of the Danube was fairly choked by the crowd of boats which bore the floods of pious pilgrims, and the great market-place (the scene of the ceremonial above alluded to) was often found filled with shoes and hats lost in the scuffle by the assembled multitudes; who, by twenty and thirty thousand* at a time, passed into the streets leading to the Imperial palace, at the balcony of which, repeatedly during the day, its illustrious guest was obliged to show himself, and distribute blessings to successive shoals of devotees. Nor was the homage confined to his person alone. The sacred slipper became, to the superstitious Viennese, an object of almost equal devotion. It was placed on a cushion in the audience-chamber, and there kissed by all the clergy, and hosts of other visitors, (some not excepted who from any but

* Fifty thousand are said to have been present in the great square on occasion of the Easter benediction.

religious motives went to bear their part in a scene, which to their eyes exhibited the lowest depth of human degradation): and it was afterwards, as a special favour, allowed to be borne as a relic into several of the most distinguished mansions in Vienna."

Sir Robert thus resumes his letter, with the account of his private audience:—

March 26th.

"I have just now paid my respects to the Pope, in his cabinet, in company with the Hanoverian and Dutch ministers. He received us standing, having no one in the room with him but his Nuncio. He asked me if I spoke Italian; and upon my saying that I understood it perfectly, but did not dare to speak it, he said obligingly—'I must, then, produce my French, indifferent as it is.' But he spoke it well, and said in a quarter of an hour as many polite and flattering things of Britain, and the learned men of that country, as could be expressed in the time. He is comely, affable, and easy, as any sovereign can be. You know I could not make this visit as British Minister, but it was very well taken from the Chevalier Keith, and I had every reason to be satisfied with my reception, as well as my two companions. We made our lowest and most respectful bows on entering and retiring; but no kissings or genuflexions of any sort. . .

"The Pope was dressed entirely in white thin cloth, a long dress, a white *calotte*, white cotton gloves, and red slippers, embroidered with gold. This is the dress of his private apartments; when he appears out of them, he has a red velvet mantle, which covers his shoulders and breast, over the white gown, and an embroidered stole of red and gold, which hangs down from each side, almost to the ground. This dress is becoming. If I tire you with this *papal* journal, blame yourself for *insisting* on every particular."

R. M. K.

It would have been well for the comfort as well as dignity of the poor Pope-errant, had every nominal son of the Catholic church testified towards him the manly courtesy of the Protestant envoy! But (as the latter had sagely predicted) the conferences held under the Imperial roof had proved as little satisfactory as the Emperor's conveniently assumed ignorance of all theological matters, and his reference of them to his chancellor—the yet more *philosophic* and inflexible Kaunitz —could possibly render them.

What that result would prove, was sufficiently indicated by the frozen bearing, and yet more freezing silence of the redoubtable minister. But the humiliation of Pius would not have been complete, had he not (in the vain hope of thus propitiating him, or moved, perhaps, by his own real love of the fine arts), after vainly awaiting a visit from the minister,* proposed one to him at his palace. His reception there was quite in keeping with Kaunitz's haughty, overbearing character, and with the whole of the singular *mélange* of honours and contumelies by which the papal crusade had been distinguished. All the family of the owner, in their richest attire, and servants innumerable, in state liveries, were in attendance on the threshold. But when the master of the house made his appearance, which was not for some time, it was in ordinary morning dress; and (with a familiarity, *certes*, unwonted towards the head of Christendom!) instead of humbly kissing the proffered hand, it was, with feigned cordiality, well shaken by the *soi-disant* courteous host! Never, too, was private *amateur* more unceremoniously *Ciceroned* over the valuable collections contained in the mansion, than this papal patron of the fine arts; who (says the

* Lest this should be incredible, it must be remembered that the Prince *never* waited on the Emperor, but that monarch always came to him.

writer before quoted, and he is hardly to be believed were the anecdote less characteristic of Kaunitz) was turned here, and pushed there, in well simulated anxiety to afford him the best lights for every picture, by the first profane hand which had presumed thus to approach his sacred person. Here, to dissemble astonishment and disgust must have been a still harder penance than to affect contentment with the personal urbanity of the Emperor; nay, than to be reduced to bear testimony (as Pius did in a consistorial oration, the translation of which has been preserved among Sir R. M. Keith's papers) to the *exemplary devotion* of this refractory son of the Church.

The crowning act of a conduct discreditable on the part of Joseph and his minister, both as Catholics and men, towards a really pious and venerable (if facile and too confident) guest, took place on his quitting the Austrian capital. The Emperor, who had met him on his approach to Vienna with filial deference, and an emotion not unaccompanied (it is said by an eye-witness) with mutual tears, took leave of him with similar or enhanced demonstrations; and the soothing promise (no difficult one for so ubiquitous a monarch) of a return of the visit at Rome.

The separation took place at the church of the Monastery of Maria Brunn, a league from Vienna; when, after joining in mutual devotions, the Emperor and Holy Father tenderly embraced each other, amid the mingled shouts and sobs of the surrounding multitude.

The monks, at the suggestion of both monarchs, resolved to immortalise these touching circumstances, by a tablet (actually placed in their church some months afterwards) recording the above affecting particulars in a Latin and German inscription.

It does not add, that on the very evening after the interview had taken place, the Imperial Commissioners

came to relieve the good monks from all future care in the administration of their revenues, by confiscating them at the command of the Crown. Could there be a more characteristic conclusion to the "singular pilgrimage," (as Sir Robert calls it) which it was his privilege to witness? *

His homeward journey partook of the mingled character of all else,—unlimited honours in wholly Catholic Bavaria,—and semi-Protestant courtesies from heretical Augsburg, for which the Lutheran magistrates were accused of idolatry, and rebuked by their constituents. Imperial leanings in the Bishop of Verona counterbalanced entire devotion on the part of the faithful at Padua and Vicenza; while even at Venice, where the whole magnificence of the senate and the enthusiasm of the people seemed called forth to lend splendour to his reception, some secret jealousy on the part of the nobles, of his too great apparent intimacy with their ermined slave, the Doge, gave rise to the Pope's abrupt departure, before the brilliant ceremony (postponed in his honour) of the marriage with the Adriatic.

The closing mortification of an idle journey (nobly redeemed by the true Christian magnanimity of the same Pius when an involuntary exile,) is thus recorded by Sir Robert:—

June 30th.

"We learn nothing more of the Pope, than that he has got quietly back to Rome, and not yet taken up the thunders of the Vatican. He was very coldly received in his own city of Cesina, where he had purposed staying three days; but the people called so loudly for bread instead of benedictions, that he left them on the second."

* By a singular coincidence, the noble convent of Mölk, where the Pope passed the first night on leaving Vienna, was the earliest asylum opened to him, by the nephew of Joseph, on the French taking possession of Rome.

A curious and authentic corroboration of the above secret history relating to the papal visit to Venice, occurs in a letter from one of the most amiable of Sir R. M. K.'s Vienna lads, (whom he calls his sweet St. Asaph,) interesting in itself, as well as from the good feeling displayed in it.

LORD ST. ASAPH* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Venice, June 4th, 1782.

DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I have this moment received the account of Rodney's victory; and as I know no one more warm in the cause of his country, I cannot defer sending you my most hearty congratulations. Having so often seen you stemming the torrent of bad news alone, opposed to the whole *corps diplomatique*, I regret extremely that I was not present when you announced this glorious event at Prince Kaunitz's.† I flatter myself, you know with how much of satisfaction I could pledge you in a bumper of your excellent champagne to the future success of Old England!

* Son to the Earl of Ashburnham.

† The reader, who has observed how anxiously Sir R. M. Keith has *thirsted* for authentic good news, to counteract the calumnies and opprobrium of which his one eproud country was then the subject throughout Europe, can hardly fail to echo the sentiments of the amiable writer. How "high" the tidings of such a signal triumph would enable the patriotic envoy to "hold his head" on this occasion, may be inferred from an anecdote related by a maturer observer than the youthful lord, who, a year or two later, visited Vienna. "Dining," says this gentleman, "at Prince Kaunitz's, the Spanish Ambassador, who had newly arrived in the country, seemed inclined to doubt some fact asserted by Sir Robert Keith. Upon which the Prince (the last man to utter an undeserved or even merited compliment) said, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous êtes étranger dans ce pays, c'est pourquoi il faut que je vous apprenne, qu'ici à Vienne, *lorsque Keith affirme, personne ne doute.*" A strong (and surely extorted) homage to truth this, on the part of a man, supposed to act on the opposite maxim, that "language was given to men to conceal their thoughts."

The joy which I feel on this occasion, and your having expressed a desire to receive some intelligence of the Pope, are my excuse for troubling you so soon again with a letter.

On my arrival here, I was informed from unquestionable authority, that Mons. Foscarini,* in his letter to the senate, had said that the Pope told him that he left Vienna much mortified (sconsolato), not having gained one point.

His Holiness's visit has occasioned no little animosity and disorder both before and after it. It was preceded by several warm debates concerning the manner of receiving him. The Doge strongly urged that the greatest magnificence should be displayed, no expense spared; and quoted from their annals the entertainments given by the Republic to Henry III. and other similar instances. This being the Doge's opinion, was sufficient reason for its being opposed. The Doge, contrary to the opinion of the senate, deferred the ceremonies usually performed on the day of the Ascension, in hopes that the Pope would assist at them; in which he was disappointed, as his Holiness left Venice the day before.

Soon after his departure, an Inquisitor of State was deputed to the Doge, to inform him that he had given great offence to the senate, in having frequently *conversed with the Pope in a low voice;* that in so doing he had violated the law, which expressly forbids the Doge's having any private conversation with sovereigns; that in consequence of this he was ordered to reprimand him, and to admonish him not to be guilty, *at his peril,* of the same offence on any future occasion. A secretary attended to take this speech down in writing! The senate is at present debating regarding the sending a

* The Doge of Venice.

minister to Petersburgh. I leave this place to-morrow; it would be unjust in me to omit saying that I have nowhere experienced greater civilities.

I am, with truth, dear Sir, your much obliged and sincere friend,

ST. ASAPH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

MY DEAR ANDREW, *Vienna, May 20th*, 1782.

If there were but three saints in the island of Great Britain of as exemplary patience as mine, they would draw down the choicest blessings of Heaven upon the whole nation! But, alas! I begin to find that this passive virtue is not only a fruitless, but a most tiresome one; and if you do not, in the course of a week, show me that my sanctity has had its recompense, I shall be tempted to desert to the other side, and try what is to be gained by *playing the devil*. I acquit you, my dear boy, and every living Drummond, of all shadow of blame in this bitter business; but still, let me remark to you in all meekness, that I have not a line from your pen since the middle of last November.

There are three mails due; will they produce anything? No news in this part of the world, but many kind and cordial wishes for the prosperity of Old England. I never understood my countrymen less than at this moment. One half of them seem to be laying trains of gunpowder, and preparing their matches to play off the fireworks; and the other half, instead of counteracting them, and making all the honest people in the kingdom aware of their designs, are catching at half-measures, and living upon the chapter of accidents. These things ought not to be so—hasten, my dear Andrew, to tell me that they are so no longer. You are a wicked set in London, and I am glad they have taken to hanging of you. But why did they not hang our cousin, George

Gordon?* We hear he became a capital performer on the violin when you had him in the Tower; and many people of high fashion in the Holy Roman Empire are persuaded that a true John Bull never learns music so well as with a rope round his neck. No wonder they look upon us as strange animals! Within these four years we have been frantic, and fanatic, and melancholy, and frolicsome, as the wind changed; but our most steady pursuit has been that of sending poor Old England to perdition. How the devil should these plodding Germans understand us, when we do not understand ourselves? I have wished ten thousand times to be in Britain; yet I sometimes think that Providence acted kindly by me, in keeping me at a distance from such a scene of profligacy and confusion.

You know, my dear Andrew, that I have no aversion to a *frolic*, but really one would think that times like the present would throw a cast of sedateness and moderation into the bulk of the nation. But nothing is less true; and you are, indeed, a most incorrigible people! Does Vestris dance so enchantingly? Will he honour us with his presence another year? In that case, a fig for Washington and Franklin! all will go delightfully! And yet this crisis demands hard blows more than any preceding one. Rodney! Rodney! what the devil are you doing with one of the finest and most numerous fleets that ever a British Admiral commanded? *All you can.* That I dare say; but will no lucky opportunity offer of having a tight bout with Monsieur de Grasse, who has done us more mischief than many better seamen, his predecessors. Alas! I fatigue my lungs, with constant ejaculations to Heaven, for some *one* prosperous event, and all in vain, for many a long year! I must have done with this subject, it is

* Lord George Gordon.

too irksome. Let me hear, at least, that you are well and happy; and that you continue to take a warm interest in the old *Highlander of Austria*. He is *for life* most cordially your friend and servant,

R. M. KEITH.

Our later naval triumphs and recognised maritime supremacy enable us very inadequately to appreciate the *delirious* joy in England, and eager participation in many states of the Continent, in the *then* unique victory of Admiral Rodney, or the delight it was calculated to afford the representative of hitherto humbled Britain, abroad. The letter, still extant (though too exclusively nautical in its *technical* details, and too voluminous for insertion here) considerately dispatched by Sir Charles Douglas, Rodney's Flag Captain, *the very morning after the battle*, to Sir Robert Murray Keith, bears, in its tattered, yet carefully stitched condition, the evidence of the many hands (many of them royal ones) through which it has passed. It was borrowed for special perusal by the Kings of Saxony and Poland, and two acknowledgments of its contents from *minor* German princes remain to attest their opinion of its importance.

The first is from the Queen's brother, Prince George of Mecklenburgh:—

"MONSIEUR,

"Permettez d'oser vous offrire mes sincères félicitations à l'occasion de la victoire éclatante emporteé par le Chevalier Rodney; souhaitant, du fond de mon âme, que cette époque glorieuse pour les armes Britanniques, dure assez longtemps pour accélérer une paix, également glorieuse pour la nation. J'ose en vous priant, Monsieur, de vous charger de l'incluse pour le Roi, vous réiterer les assurances de l'estime, et de la considération parfaite avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

"GEORGE DUC DE MECKLENBURG."

The other is such a contrast in its light and somewhat irreverent tone, that it may be given as a specimen of a hunting *bon-vivant* German prince's epistolary style. The penmanship (in huge text) would disgrace a schoolboy:—

"J'ai bien des obligations à mon cher chévalier, de la peine que vous vous êtes donné pour me participer les exploits de vos *braves mariniers!* Nous venons de profiter du beau temps pour la chasse aux becasses, et le reste de la semaine nous donnerons la chasse au diable.* Je ne vous dirai pas que je veux que ce monsieur-là m'emporte si je ne vous estime pas; parceque le capucin m'a defendu à langage: mais j'ose bien jurer, par Calvin et Luther, que je suis, et serai toute ma vie, mon cher chévalier, votre très humble et réconnaissant,

"JOSEPH FREDERIC DUC DE SAXE."

MR. BOYD† TO SIR ROBERT KEITH.

London, May 24th, 1782.

I SHOULD have much wished, dear Sir Robert, to have given you the account of our late glorious achievements by the first post, but I was at Danson, and only returned to town yesterday. It would be absurd in me to repeat what your letters must already have informed you of; but in addition to the joy which so gallant and glorious an event must inspire every Englishman with, I feel many private reasons for rejoicing. Among the first is the satisfaction you must have in promulgating such an important and decisive victory; next comes the share I have in everything that can contribute to

* Alluding to some festival of the Romish Church, in a spirit of levity and irreligion, then too prevalent within its pale.

† This gentleman (afterwards Sir John Boyd) affectionately and frequently mentioned (as the *Baron*) in the correspondence, passed some years at Vienna.

the happiness of as worthy a man as ever breathed—our friend George Rodney. I feel, likewise, a considerable pleasure in that great commander's having given such a blow to our arch-enemy, as must silence every voice that was ready to cry out against him. I have fought many battles for him at home; and you cannot doubt that it gives me inexpressible satisfaction to see every officer in our fleet write in the fullest panegyric on their brave commander. The debate (which I inclose, lest you should not have it in your paper) most incontestably proves the universal harmony, and unanimous opinion of every man upon the business of that day. I am sure you will be glad to hear of the honours conferred on the principal actors. Rodney is created an English peer, Hood and Drake Irish peers, and Douglas and Affleck made baronets. All this is to be done *immediately*.

The French can now gloss over nothing. We have a correct list of their force as well as our own, and on casting up the number of guns, they exceeded us by seventy-two. On the other hand, they are entitled to praise for the gallantry of their conduct. The captain of one of their seventy-fours that was taken, when he had not a mast standing, and his ship lay a mere ungovernable hulk in the water, took the colours, tied them himself to a stick, and fixed them on his quarter-deck; nor did he strike till he had not a gun to fire.

Monsieur de Grasse had expended all his ammunition when he struck. He had above 430 men killed in the action, besides his wounded; near double our loss of killed in our whole fleet. Lord Cranston relates that never was there so shocking a sight as the *Ville de Paris* exhibited when he went on board her; every deck covered with dead bodies, and a deluge of blood. It is miraculous that our loss was so small, considering the length, the severity, and universality of the engagement;

at one time every ship in both fleets was engaged. I am so full of public feelings, that I cannot say a word on private affairs, but must end as I began, by expressing the peculiar pleasure I experience in reflecting on the comfort you will feel in receiving this good news; and how doubly welcome it must be to you, not only from its real glory and importance to your country, but from having had such a hard task in struggling against all the previous painful tidings we had been receiving day after day, for so many months before.

Among other particulars which have transpired since the action, I cannot help giving you a further account from Lord Cranston. When he went on board the *Ville de Paris* to take possession of her, he delivered a polite message from Sir G. Rodney to Monsieur de Grasse, desiring he would continue the command of his own ship while she remained with the fleet; which he declined, from being exhausted with fatigue and unable to attend to it. He begged to retire to his cabin to take some rest, but before he did it, or before he could ever enjoy any peace, he wished to know the opinions of the British officers as to his conduct. Lord Cranston made him easy by assuring him they admired his bravery, and did justice to his efforts; and if they found any blame, it was for his not having struck sooner. This he accounted for by saying he was determined not to strike his flag on any account till the day closed, for fear of the effect it might have on the rest of his fleet; but he said his officers had all represented to him that his ship was totally incapable of making any further resistance some hours before, and every shot they fired latterly was fetched out of the hold.

Monsieur de Grasse retired, and Lord Cranston set about examining and clearing the ship, when he found her on fire in five different places. The men who were not killed or wounded were mostly drunk, and he could

not get the smallest attention paid to his orders. He was, therefore, obliged to disturb Monsieur de Grasse, who jumped up, put on his gown and slippers, drew his sword, and came upon deck; when he found the confusion so great that he was compelled to make pretty free and severe use of his weapon before he could obtain any attention to his commands. This brought them to reason; they soon got the fires under, De Grasse returned to his cabin, and Lord C. got the ship into the best order he could. He soon found a great number of cooks set to work in preparing an elegant repaśt, which was served up to the officers.

Lord Cranston expected an invitation, but not receiving it, or the slightest civility from any one French officer, he went down to them, expressed his resentment, and said that he had had as much fatigue and as little refreshment as themselves, but that he would see every one of his officers and crew refreshed before a single Frenchman ate a morsel, though he himself would touch nothing before them. This occasioned some surprise, but was acquiesced in; and when a second supper was prepared, they thought proper to send a polite invitation and apology to Lord Cranston for an accidental omission before, which proceeded from no design or disrespect. He accepted both, but says that no scene of noise, riot, and drunkenness ever equalled what followed that entertainment; not a Frenchman who did not appear to have gained a complete victory instead of having suffered a defeat. This does not tell much to the credit of their humanity,* considering the number of their friends that were lying dead and wounded in the ship. This is a long story, but as it is characteristic and *genuine*, I could not help giving it to you. The

* It is very pleasing to have to contrast so many and recent instances of the interchange of the most humane and brotherly offices between the naval men of the once hostile nations.

season is so wet, cold, and unhealthy, that scarce a family in this part of the world is free from sickness. In my life I never remember so general an influenza.

H. B.

MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, June 3rd, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

Though I wrote to you not long ago, and have now less time for writing than, I believe, any man in his Majesty's dominions, I can't help troubling you with a line or two, which you'll find is indeed, in the literal sense, troubling you, not being for the mere pleasure of conversation. But as I shall, in my present arduous and responsible situation,* have occasion for all the helps imaginable, so there is no source, I am sure, I may more confidently draw from than yours; and as there is no military system more or better studied than that where you live, I shall be infinitely obliged to you for any such lights on some parts of it as I fancy I can by any means apply, to remedy a multitude of defects subsisting in ours. Among many wants which strike me, and which I have long had the inclination, without the power of supplying, are those of a proper seminary for officers, and particularly for breeding up officers' children; for which, as you know, our Woolwich academy is but a miserable, confined institution.

Another is for soldiers' children, of which there is indeed one in Ireland, which is grown something that promises to be useful; but my ideas are much more extensive, and I don't despair of being able, one time or other, to bring it about on an enlarged plan. I have heard that the institutions for both these purposes have been lately enlarged and improved by the Emperor;

* Marshal Conway was at this period Commander-in-Chief.

and I should be much obliged to you for any information you can be so good as to procure me, which you judge could be of use.

I should also be glad to know the particulars of the institution of the lately-established military order; and to know the details and the effects of the limitation of the soldier's time of service, which I know obtains as well in the Imperial as in the Prussian service.

I conclude you have, by this time, taken leave of your Holy guest. I have for some time prodigiously envied you the enjoyment of one of the most extraordinary scenes that I suppose was ever exhibited on this earthly theatre; and which I hear has been conducted by his Imperial Majesty with a good sense and propriety that adds much to my great admiration for him.

You will by this time have heard of our great naval victory in the West Indies, which we flatter ourselves may (under Providence) give an important turn to our affairs. Our last Indian news has also for some time worn a good colour; and we flatter ourselves, though perhaps threatened and out-numbered in these European quarters, we need *not tremble.*

A very recent event, is what may in all propriety be called the *pacification* of Ireland; the full flow of their affections, which appearances now promise, and their having so unanimously shown it by the noble grant of 20,000 seamen—all these things have raised our spirits, and our stocks considerably; and though where they have depended on our yielding and reconciling spirits, I doubt if you will approve—yet they add immediate strength, and have produced a present actual unanimity at home, to be shortly followed (though on the same yielding principle) by an equal reconciliation with America. All this is the completion of my system, which you and I have sometimes debated about, as well as our friend Yorke. I shall not *triumph,* till

the effects are more clear and complete; yet I own my confidence is great. Adieu, my dear Sir. I beg you not to let me be forgot by your friends, whom I shall always be happy to call mine. Accept Lady Aylesbury's compliments, and believe me,

Your most faithful and affectionate,

H. S. C.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

Vienna, August 17th, 1782.

My dear Yorke,

I most sincerely congratulate you upon your marriage with as amiable and honest a young woman as the King's dominions contain.* I have followed her steps (though often at a distance) from the cradle upwards, and with the warmth of almost parental affection.† My heart was set upon seeing her happily settled as the wife of a man of honour and truth. Heaven has fulfilled that wish in its utmost extent!

My felicitations to her are founded, not upon your present affluent circumstances or future prospects, but upon the power she now possesses of following the natural bent of her disposition and principles, by making the house of her husband and friend the seat of domestic happiness and contentment, through a long series of years. She will tell you, my dear Yorke, that she saw in her own father and in mine, two men, drawing towards fourscore, who, at that age, blessed the hour that united them to women of merit and steady principle

* Lady Elizabeth Lindsay, daughter to the Earl of Balcarres, and cousin to the writer.

† In a letter, written nearly ten years previously, to his sister, he thus expresses himself: "Why do you not mention my sweet little ward, Lady Elizabeth? Seriously, I think little Bessy a jewel of too much value not to be set hereafter in the purest gold, and placed to the best advantage."

May you follow their example, my dear Philip! I have not the smallest doubt of your doing so, though I shall not be alive to applaud you.

I recommend all the Lindsays to you; they are excellent people, and the boys will fight their way through life with spirit and success.* Lord Balcarres is a high-minded, brave, and generous lad as any in Britain, and I feel proud when I recollect that he was my *pupil.* I respect your present enjoyments too much to interrupt them by touching upon disagreeable politics. A thousand kind things to all Yorkes and Lindsays; my *love* to Lady Eliza. You are well assured that no man is more deeply interested in your happiness than your faithful friend,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, September 14th, 1782.

I NEVER was more affected by any melancholy event which did not immediately regard my nearest and dearest of friends, than by the sad news of the unaccountable shipwreck of Admiral Kempenfeldt and his gallant crew, almost within an English harbour.† Surely

* Every part of this fond prediction was punctually fulfilled. Domestic felicity attended the pair addressed, through a life protracted, on the Earl's part, beyond its usual span; and still happily prolonged in that of his venerable partner, who witnessed the prosperity and distinction of her whole band of brothers.

† This appalling event, occasioned by contempt of an unimagined danger, in suffering the vessel during a slight repair to be incautiously heeled, has been revived in the public mind, by recent successful attempts to remove the hull, and recover a portion of the guns, &c. It forms a pleasing coincidence, that at the distance of sixty years, these efforts should have been presided over, as Port Admiral, by the late Sir Philip Henderson Durham, at the time of the catastrophe seventh lieutenant, and one of the few officers saved; to whom, as a valuable memorial of his early escape, and subsequent gallantry in his country's service, a recovered iron cannon was presented by the Board of Ordnance, and

there is an adverse fate which persecutes poor Old England! it grieves me to the heart, my dear Andrew, to see so many proofs of that painful persuasion. At a moment when my ardent imagination was seeking for the name of Kempenfeldt either in the mouth of the Mediterranean or the Baltic, he is a corpse upon the British shore, and by some awkward mismanagement unworthy of our naval skill and experience. This is, indeed, afflicting. Our Bourbon enemies, within my view, do honour to Kempenfeldt and to themselves, by the sorrow they express at this accident. I am very impatient to learn all its melancholy particulars.

I confess to you, my dear Andrew, (but without a grain of peevishness,) that I have not, for years past, comprehended fully any one operation of the war; and I am still more in the dark with respect to your clandestine attempts to trump up a dirty peace. This I say to you in confidence, because I am determined never to hurt the servants of the State; though I have long given up the hopes of being able to render them such services as become my principles. All my trusty friends will believe me when I say, that the bribe of a dukedom would not lead my pen to dabble in dirty ink. Happily it is permitted to vent my honest feelings without restraint; and I have never been called upon to take the smallest share in the present obscure and inauspicious transactions!

Who is going to Gibraltar? When will that necessary exertion be undertaken?—since it is impossible, even in these dilatory times, that the succours can be withheld, till they are too late or altogether superfluous. We expect every hour to hear that the assault is already begun. When will the turbulent campaign

erected in front of the family mansion, at Largo, in Fife. The noblest monument to the unhappy sufferers is to be found in Cowper's never-to-be-forgotten ballad.

in St. Stephen's Chapel begin? The questions to be agitated there are of greater moment than any which have presented themselves for a century. If Lord North, from patriotic considerations, shall determine to support this administration, for fear of a *worse*, then matters may prosper; but without Lord North and his friends, I see not the smallest chance of their standing. I have not the least idea of the manner in which the troops on both sides will be mustered. Pray, my dear Andrew, open my eyes upon this subject as soon as you can, and believe me, ever yours, most cordially,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, November 30th, 1782.

Your letter of the 7th was very welcome to me, my dear Andrew, and I gladly accept as an apology for your silence, your enjoyment in the country. What a charming party your father had, with Rigby, the Chancellor, Lord Weymouth, &c. How delighted I should have been to occupy a chair at his hospitable board, in those days of festivity! I should have received comfort from such a company, in this moment of anxious doubt, lest the honour and interests of Old England should be sacrificed to party rage and personal views. I never felt so uneasy as at present, my dear Andrew; for I not only am in the dark with respect to the real state of parties in your depraved nation; but can hardly see a peep of daylight into the intended measures of the administration under which I serve. Surely the brave Elliott* and Howe have so far reinstated the national affairs as to give full room for the most vigorous and *successful* exertions of our strength, if there is any

* General Elliott, created Lord Heathfield for his gallant conduct at Gibraltar.

degree of the ancient spirit still existing among us! I cannot entertain so mean an opinion of the men in power, as to suppose them capable of letting down Old England from her present dignified situation; or that they can submit to receive the law from powers who are *ten times more exhausted* than herself! May the opening of parliament relieve me from all my anxiety. May the love of peace be accompanied with due regard to the rights and dearest interests of our country; and I venture to foretel that all will go well in the course of another twelvemonth.

I know nothing about your present negotiation at Paris: thank Heaven! I have not the *least hand* in it! and I am confident that no minister will think of employing my pen in any species of *dirty work*. May the hands of government be strengthened by the reunion of all the best men in the kingdom, to carry the first great question; and all the rest will follow of course. I shall be *upon thorns* till I see the issue of the first debates. Pray, my sweet Andrew, help me to understand them! The bulk of the nation in which I live received with rapture all the glorious tidings from Gibraltar. Three of our poets have already sung the exploits of Elliott in very good Latin and German verses. The whole Austrian nation is prepared to applaud those honours which the King and Parliament will doubtless bestow upon the heroic commanders. May they mark the gratitude of a *great* nation!

I was made very happy by a visit of my old comrade, General Boyd,* on his way from Gibraltar to England. He is as pleasant a fellow as any in the world, and really cheered my spirits, even in these abominable times. He has been received with great distinction

* Second in command at the glorious defence of Gibraltar, where the idea of the red-hot shot, which did such execution on the Spanish floating batteries, is said to have been his.

here by the sovereign and all the best people, and, indeed, he well deserves it. I am sorry to think that, after visiting the Emperor's camp with me to-morrow, he must set out the next day for England, as he is to visit our old master, Prince Ferdinand, in Brunswick. By the way, how I envy him that happiness; but I am surely one of the wicked! (though my conscience does not tell me how), since there is neither rest nor comfort for me, at a time when treaties of peace are signing in every quarter. I am *literally* the *Mungo* of all the politicians in Europe! One wish only I have, and a very sincere one—that the peace, about which so many *cooks* are employed, may turn out safe and honourable! The honour or blame, be they what they may, belong in no degree whatever to me. I am ready, however, to applaud what is *right* and *well done*, be the peace-maker John, or Thomas, or Peter!

Yours, cordially,

R. M. K.

LORD APSLEY* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Apsley House, 11th April, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

It was my intention to have written to you from Paris, and not to have remained so long silent, had I not thought that by waiting till I came hither, I might render my letter more interesting, by communicating to you something of the events in our unhappy distracted country. It otherwise would have contained little more than my sincere thanks for your great kindness to me during my stay at Vienna; which, however agreeable it might have been for me to

* Afterwards the well-known Earl Bathurst. The letter is curious, as showing how early in his life the prudence and moderation so conspicuous in the veteran statesman, manifested themselves.

express, would not have had anything very extraordinary to engage your attention. It is but the tribute which every Englishman finds it his duty to pay for his kind reception.

I should have kept my promise in writing to you the moment a ministry was formed, had I not conceived that Mr. Fox's letter would have arrived as soon as mine, if not sooner; and had I not been engaged that post-day (last Friday) in writing a refusal of an office which the new Administration did me the honour to offer me.

Lord Bathurst seemed most desirous of my accepting it; and I even went to Court to kiss hands on Friday; but some delay happening concerning the other members of the Board of Admiralty, I had time enough to prevail on my father to have his permission to write a refusal; not being willing so early and so blindly to embrace any party, but more particularly one made up of such discordant principles as that which composes the present Administration.

With respect to what previously happened, the newspaper accounts were pretty accurate. The King continues to be most averse to the men he has found himself under the necessity of employing, and has refused to make any peers; declaring that with respect to *permanent honours* they shall not be masters. They are at a great loss whom to appoint as successor to Lord Temple, who is determined to resign. Lord Derby has shown more sense than I thought he possessed, in declining that honour. It is said that Lord Mansfield was offered to be Speaker of the House of Lords, by the Duke of Rutland, merely as a compliment; and that his lordship has distressed the Administration much by accepting the offer. There is not a shilling in the Treasury, but it must be added that the monied men in the city have made vast offers, and of immediate advance of the sums required.

If you now consider England as degraded, you would not change your opinion by coming over (which many of your friends wish and expect that you will), and examining the manners of the chief men among us. Such open prostitution, and prevention of seduction, by putting oneself up to sale, was perhaps scarcely ever known in any country! I have heard men declare, in public company, that if their friends had not places, they would not accept any themselves, nor support the Administration. People are the more importunate, knowing that things will be run very hard on the first division; so that for a permanent Administration, you must expect none for some time.

I suppose Mr. Fox must have informed you that the only change, with respect to the division of business between the two Secretaries of State, is America being added to his share, as being a *foreign power!* The discipline of the navy is much endangered, if not totally destroyed, by Lord Howe's mild conduct on the occasion of the mutiny. If you ask me how that affair has ended, much and nearly as it concerns us, I can only answer, as every one else in London does, "I know nothing about it;" all men confining their inquiries to what persons have resigned, or who have accepted places. I hope that you will now come over, to get over your old-fashioned ideas of loving England for England's sake: for men of such principles can by no means represent the nation. Before I finish this long and tedious letter, I am charged by Lord Bathurst with his sincere thanks to you for your kind letter to him; and to express how highly sensible he is of the attention which you were so good as to show to, dear Sir,

Your faithful and much-obliged humble servant,

APSLEY.

LORD HEATHFIELD* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Gibraltar, May 8th, 1783.

DEAR GENERAL,

The letter you honoured me with of the 8th December, *viâ* Leghorn, was transmitted by shipping, and only reached this place two days ago. I can't disguise my vanity upon receiving your approbation of what has passed here during the enemy's persevering attempt. You don't make these professions as a minister, but as a friend (perhaps too partial) and as a warrior not of yesterday. We have trodden the thorny path together, sometimes too near the precipice. My journey is near concluding; but you, dear friend, have before your eyes a brilliant career. The chace is pleasant indeed, *quand on est rompu au poil et à la plume*. How you must enjoy the Imperial Court where military and political science are in perfection!

I take the liberty to enclose an answer to Captain Riddell, with his commanding officer's and my entire approbation of his design for improvement: under General Keith's protection, he has a fine opportunity.

Now, my dear Sir, I must apply to you on the most delicate subject, and one in which nothing but your knowledge and address can be of service to me.

At Pisa, in Italy, Lieutenant Kochler of the Artillery, one of my most confidential aides-de-camp, was presented to his Imperial Majesty, who was pleased to converse with him a long while, and upon the whole, testified such approbation of my conduct as I dare not repeat; adding that he *should have much pleasure in seeing and conversing with me*. Such expressions from such a man,

* Better known, perhaps, as the General Elliott, whose memorable defence of Gibraltar is so modestly alluded to in a letter to his former comrade.

and that man the present Emperor of Germany!—it is not easy to conceive my astonishment. I can only receive them with respectful silence.* If anything is proper to be said for me, to your friendship I must have recourse. I am certain you will not abandon an old comrade in his difficulties. Let me entreat you to do what is right. Should Lieutenant Kochler be fortunate enough to reach Vienna, let me beg your countenance of him. He will not abuse it, and I think him worthy of a soldier's notice.

Happy I am Prince Kaunitz sees me in a favourable light. I first knew him in Flanders, just as he began to take the lead in Europe. Forgive me talking of what alone concerns myself, and do favour me with some commands, that my obedience may prove the preference I give to your wishes.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
G. A. Elliott.

In 1783, when the courtesy and good offices of Sir R. M. Keith to his young countrymen had become pretty well known, the Duke of Montagu thus writes:—

Windsor Castle, Sept. 6th, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I am thoroughly aware how you are pestered with recommendations of young travellers, which is very natural, as their friends cannot do them more essential service than to recommend them to your favour and protection. I feel that so much, that I cannot resist adding to the number, by commending to you my

* These expressions of unaffected modesty, from a man with whose exploit all Europe at that time rung, enhance if possible its glory. It will have been seen that a friendship so honourable to Sir Robert Keith was *mutual*, from his frequent expressions regarding the brave governor *previous to the siege.*

nephew Lord Stopford, who will have the honour of waiting on you with this. I think him a very amiable young man; I shall have the satisfaction of being sure he is so, if he has the good fortune to merit your approbation; and I have great pleasure in persuading myself that he will profit much by having the advantage of your conversation.

As I have his welfare very much at heart, it was my earnest wish that he might pass the winter, at least, under your eye at Vienna. But what confirmed this step to be preferable to any other, was his Majesty (who spontaneously had given him an ensigncy in the Guards) being most graciously pleased to say to his parents, Lord and Lady Courtown, "You cannot do better than send your son to Vienna, and get the Duke of Montagu to recommend him to his friend Sir Robert Keith."* I can venture to say that they, as well as myself, will feel greatly obliged to you for whatever good offices you may be pleased to honour him with, and I am with great truth and regard, and with most perfect esteem, dear Sir,

Your very faithful, &c.,

MONTAGU.

SIR JAMES HARRIS† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Frankfort, Wednesday, Nov. 5th, 1783.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

After one of the pleasantest journeys possible, through the finest of countries, and with the finest

* On another occasion (indeed on many) the King similarly expressed himself. "Lord Morton (writes one of his friends) informed you of the audience he had of the King. His Majesty mentioned you in the most friendly and flattering manner imaginable; and finished by saying, 'Your lordship never could have been under the direction of so *able or excellent* a man as Sir Robert Keith.'"

† Afterwards Lord Malmsbury, the celebrated diplomatist.

weather, we arrived here yesterday between ten and eleven at night. The first use I make of a pen since I left Vienna, is to thank you most sincerely and candidly for your more than kind reception. My visit there has in every point fully met my expectations, and in none more completely, my dear Sir, than by personifying, if I may use the term, my friendship and esteem for you. I recollect, with as tenacious a memory as Hamlet did the "Remember me" of his father's spirit, the last words you said to me in your closet; and be assured that I place you at the top of the list of those on whose regard and good will I set the highest value. My stay at Vienna operated on my mind like balm on a green wound. My soul wanted that calm which the society of the upright and candid can alone give; and it is now somewhat restored to that energy it was near losing. I rely on you to find an opportunity of expressing mine and my lady's respectful gratitude to the Emperor. To Prince Kaunitz you cannot say too much. He need not suspect my veracity, as I can have no interest in flattering him. To Madame de Pergen, Madame de Thun, and, if you please, Galitzen, the kindest compliments. Count Romanzow and I have already talked over the first of these ladies,* and I do not like him the less for his high esteem and admiration for her. I am most sincerely anxious for the recovery of Madame de Thun, and pray you to keep me informed of the state of her health.

You will not forget me to Count Philip; he treated me too kindly not to be entitled to a very large share of my gratitude for the many marks of attention I received at Vienna.

I shall bear in my mind all you wish me to do and

* Madame de Pergen and Madame de Thun, here mentioned, were the most distinguished ornaments of Vienna society, and the peculiar friends of Sir R. M. Keith.

say when I arrive in England, which will probably be about the 18th.

I can have no politics worthy of your notice. The military preparations of France are still going on with as much activity as her credit and pecuniary resources will admit of. But these are at their lowest ebb, and a general alarm of a national bankruptcy is gone abroad. The fate of Dantzick seems decided, unless some tutelary angel interposes in their behalf.

Adieu, my ever dear Sir Robert. Let us be good correspondents throughout life, whether for the sake of the service, or for that of maintaining, I trust I may say, a *mutual* regard.

Ever yours most affectionately,

JAMES HARRIS.

Lady Harris and my sister partake of every feeling expressed in this letter.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, August 14th, 1784.

THOUGH I am living in a constant whirlwind of dissipation, feasting, dancing, and courtly waggery, following from morning till morning, my amiable Prince Frederick, I will not delay a moment to thank you, my dear Andrew, for your welcome and kind letter of the 27th July. Now or never, my brave Drummonds must help to lift me out of the mire, where I am floundering over head and ears. My ruin has been drawing on from year to year, (though, Heaven knows, by no extravagance of my own,) but this *Princely* visit of a *month* has hastened it exceedingly. Be not afraid, however, my dear Andrew, that matters are worse than you know of. My Drummonds are my only consolation; for if I were to break up here to-morrow, my goods and chattels at Vienna would *more* than amply

suffice to carry me clear out of this country. But to have an independent crust of bread in my old days, is the laudable wish of your old friend, and if, under the guidance of my Drummonds, that great object can be secured, I shall be the happiest of mortals.

You know I have not drawn any money from my agents in England since I got the 10th regiment; but I only mention *en passant*, as Harry knows *what I have*, and how it is to be disposed of. I shall never inquire more about the matter. Cut and carve upon me, as you please—and make of me *what you can!* Lord, Lord! when shall I see you all at Cadlands? These wicked continental politics grow more and more intricate, and they will, I fear, tie me by the pen for many months to come. If I can do *good at last*, all my trouble will be repaid ten-fold. In the mean time I can assure you (without presumption) that my superiors pay me handsomely in *praise*, if not in hard money. Alas! they have little hard money for themselves! I am rejoiced that matters go so swimmingly in parliament. The peace with Tippoo Saib (which I sent you to England about three weeks since) will strengthen the hands of government, and credit of the East India Company. The general esteem of the nations of Europe goes along with Mr. Pitt, and he truly deserves it.

My young Prince is one of the handsomest and most excellent young men I ever knew.* This is not flattery, but *plain honest truth*. I am proud of the honour of presenting him, and he is equally beloved and admired

* Prince Frederick, afterwards Duke of York. As a specimen of the expensive style in which this visit was performed, General Grosvenor, in writing to Sir R. M. Keith to take a house for his royal pupil, stipulated for stabling for fourteen horses, and lodging for six grooms. The biped appendages were in proportion; and the envoy's expenses may be imagined.

here. In three days hence he will go to a country-house of the Emperor's, and afterwards accompany him to all the camps. I dare not stir from Vienna, at the present juncture, otherwise I should attend his Royal Highness every where. I had, besides the Prince and three officers of his *suite*, at least a score of John Bulls, who are genteel lads, and do me credit. But how they devour the remainder of my substance, you will easily conceive! The Pergens and Thuns remember you kindly. They have been the ornaments of my feasts and balls; and Elizabeth Thun danced most nimbly, and looked most lovely at my ball the night before last, though, alas! she cannot yet swallow anything solid. Tell this to Boyd, who I am sorry should, on this occasion, merit the epithet of the laziest fellow in Christendom. I must hasten to join my Prince. Adieu, my dear Andrew; Heaven bless you and yours!

Ever your true and warm friend,

R. M. K.

This mention of the Duke of York, whom, to prove that his Majesty's flattering expressions were not words of course, the King had sent to Sir Robert's care, to spend some time at Vienna, where no pains or expense was spared to make his residence agreeable to him, may lead to the insertion here (though, like the rest of these miscellaneous epistles, rather out of the order of dates) of one or more of the earlier effusions of a gratitude, which, to the honour of that warm-hearted young Prince, remained unimpaired during a lengthened correspondence of several years. It will be seen that he, too, reverted to his stay at Vienna with the fondest reminiscences, and long cherished for the members of Sir R. Keith's select *coterie*, as well as for himself, the most grateful and affectionate regard.

Korlitz, near Brünn, August 31st, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Permit me to repeat to you my most sincere thanks for the very great civilities and attention which I received from you during my stay at Vienna. Indeed I shall ever remember with pleasure the time which I passed there; and I am sure that it was wholly owing to your goodness. The camp here finishes to-morrow. The Emperor spoke publicly to-day at table, of the proposed alliance between the French and Dutch; and said that he had sent the Dutch word that he meant to send some ships down the Scheldt; and if they were in the least molested, he should consider it as a declaration of war. Yesterday a courier arrived from Paris, and I don't think that the Emperor was perfectly satisfied with the contents. As there are many things which I would wish to inform you of, or learn from you, which (like this) I am afraid to trust to the post, I should be exceedingly obliged to you, to send me some words and names for *people*, not down in our cyphers, by which we might communicate without danger. Pray give our very best compliments to the Pergens and Thuns; and I am sure it would be very ungrateful if I did not beg you to make my best respects to Madame Zichy.

I am most sincerely, ever, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate,

FREDERICK.

SIR GREY COOPER TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Cavendish Square, March 17th, 1785.

DEAR SIR ROBERT KEITH,

I cannot sufficiently express to you the satisfaction which I received in reading your most pleasing

and favourable report of the character, principles, and good conduct of my son. It still vibrates on my heart. I communicated the pleasure to an affectionate mother, to two sisters, and a brother, who have the blessing of sensibility. They have all rejoiced with me in reading your charming letter over and over again; and they are united in their gratitude to you for your kind attention to the beloved young man who has had the good fortune to have been placed under your care; to have attended to your instructions; to have merited your approbation, and to have obtained your friendship. It is with the utmost regret that I find myself obliged to recall him from so excellent a school, and from so advantageous a situation. He would take the liberty of showing you my last letter, which fixed the time for his return to his regiment, viz., the latter end of the month of June. If you will honour him with a letter to the Duke of York or Prince William, his reception at Hanover will repay him for his deviation from his road, and perhaps may procure him the distinction of being the bearer of any letters which their Royal Highnesses may have occasion to convey to London. Perhaps for some late intelligence, the route by Berlin may not be quite *so proper*; perhaps while I am writing, "Armorum sonitum toto Germania cœlo audiit." I leave him to your direction: continue, dear Sir Robert, to be his guide, his mentor, his friend, and be assured that I am always, with the truest regard and esteem,

Your affectionate and much obliged humble servant,

GREY COOPER.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, May 21st, 1785.

MY DEAR ANDREW,

The same goodness of heart, and zeal of friendship which ever distinguished your character, are strongly

manifested in your letter of the 25th of April, from Bath. May the effects of your two months' residence there prove to the highest degree salutary to the health of our sweet Lady Mary, who well deserves that the blessing of complete health should be added to those she enjoys, and knows how to value. I have heard of the very intricate affairs which your uncle and Mr. Harley have to settle with the Government, and happy shall I be to hear that they are terminated to the *entire* satisfaction of those two worthy men. I have my youngest sister now in London.* An old maiden, without any of the faults attached to that title. She has an excellent understanding, and a warm heart; I therefore recommend her to the intimate acquaintance of my Drummonds.

You have seen, by this time, that their high and blustering Mightinesses in Holland, have completely bent their necks to the French yoke, and are going to subscribe to the terms of pacification which France has dictated. This will restore tranquillity to *one* part of Europe. But I am at a loss to foretell how long it may last. There reigns a general ferment in most of the cabinets on the Continent, and a restless pursuit of great plans, which, sooner or later, must draw on a general combustion.

The worst of the matter (with regard to myself) is, that whilst there is even the distant appearance of a gathering storm my patriotic zeal will not allow me to think of quitting the *deck*, even when I have no share whatever in directing the *course* of the vessel. I believe, my dear Andrew, that I often push my concern and anxiety too far; but I have, in so many repeated instances, seen the political affairs of Old England, with respect to the *Continent*, left to the mercy of the winds

* The 'Mrs. Bethune Baliol of Sir W. Scott's "Chronicles of the Canongate."

and waves, from the negligence or supineness of the pilots, that I am most heartily disposed to stand to my tackle *in all weathers*, in order to lend a helping hand to the present commanders, whenever they may think proper to give the ship more way. They have excellent principles and dispositions, that I will say for them, and I wish them success in every shape! I was glad to hear, by the last letters, that the session of parliament is likely to end so soon, and in so satisfactory a manner. Nobody has yet explained to me how the Irish affair will be settled; but I trust that it has been *maturely weighed* (as one of the most important in every point of view), and that the termination will prove equally advantageous to both nations.

Your young Pitt is indeed a wonderful instance of the power of early genius, and I cannot tell you how much I long to know him personally. One or two of the happy days you spent *together* at Cadlands* would have been to me a heartfelt enjoyment. Pray keep me in the kind remembrance of the *Gang*, and all my Vienna lads. They will be the comforts of my old age. There is a Mr. Scott, of Harden, just now gone from hence to England, who is a pleasant and valuable young man. If he comes in your way make much of him. He deserves it!

Adieu. Yours with true cordiality,

R. M. K.

FIELD MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, June 12th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

I have at this moment in my mind a strange conflict of contrition, shame, and repentance, mixed with pleasure and sincere satisfaction: the last from the

* The seat of Mr. Drummond in Hampshire.

great assurance your two letters give me against the failure of your usual friendship and goodness; and the former, most justly, from my scandalous neglect to acknowledge the merit of these proofs of them. You say, besides, a thousand things which claim my earliest attention, as they every way interest my heart. All that effects your situation, fortune, or feelings, does so; but seem doubly to do so, when those feelings sympathise with my own; and I can't say in how many circumstances the things you say of yourself, tally with those which daily occur to me. Many in our fortunes, many in our minds, are the same; though our situations are now pretty different. The compensations Nature has contrived, to suit our various situations, are surely among the kindest of her works; 'tis they which seem to level all conditions, and procure a kind of balance to keep the philosophic mind always in its position. I believe that the little commotions and deviations which appear to throw us out of our bias, should be considered rather as benefits than misfortunes; as they create a kind of active sensation which stirs and animates. Perfect happiness is not our destination here; and complete contentment would create a sort of stagnation hurtful to it. We must, I believe, have something to expect, and wish, as well as to enjoy. What enjoyment alone may do in a future state, I know not; but here below, I am persuaded we require a little spur.

You can't imagine how pleased and happy you make us, in even a distant hope that you may one day be of our neighbourhood. Remember, however, that life is short at its best, and precarious, and that age steals upon us; therefore, I would fain we should make our hay while the remaining sun shines; and if I knew the time, I would with peculiar ardour set about to prepare your nest as we have settled.

En attendant, je me console comme je puis. I am a

perfect male Penelope in your absence, busier than a bee or spider, making webs and houses, and sowing and planting in fifty shapes, which I intend should make me very rich, but which, unfortunately, make me very poor at present; though, having amusement and expectancy, I am as happy as a richer man. And all this, with the much improved beauties of our little paradise, I desire you 'll lose no time in contemplating.

I doubt you 'll not yet break your Vienna bonds, nor give up your chimera of settling and moulding the hearts of all Christian Kings and Princes to your liking; but peace being now, I understand, agreed on, if not actually made, I think you may take the world off your shoulders for a short time, and let us see you in perfect idleness here. It will be a great relief to you to be rid of such a load; and we shall enjoy your good spirits* the better.

Accept Lady Aylesbury's kindest compliments, and believe me, dear Sir, with the greatest truth, and sincere esteem, your faithful servant,

H. Conway.

PRINCE FREDERICK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hanover, August 9th, 1785.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to return you my most sincere thanks for your two very obliging letters, as well as for your kind congratulations upon the new title which his Majesty has been pleased to give me. I do not believe, at least at present, that I shall return to England; you may, however, depend upon it, that I shall take the

* Those of the noble old veteran, now verging on eighty, who, after filling the most stormy situations in actual warfare, and political life, and for many years presiding as Commander-in-Chief over the armies of his country, could not only enjoy his "little paradise," but build castles for the future, afford a delightful picture.

very first opportunity to express to his Majesty how much I feel your goodness towards me during my stay at Vienna; and I can assure you that it would give me infinite pleasure, if it were in my power, to make you another visit.*

I am exceedingly sorry that Mr. Cooper, son to Sir Grey Cooper, left Brunswick without informing me; as I wished exceedingly to have sent you, by him, a list of words and names, which would have rendered our correspondence much easier. I shall, however, take the very first safe means to do so. Affairs are in a very unsettled state, and I confess I am very anxious to know how they will terminate.

Grenville desires me to give you his best compliments, and to say he would have written had I not been doing so. I am extremely happy to hear that the Pergens, Thuns, and Zichis, are all in good health. Pray, remember me to them in the strongest manner; and tell Madame de Zichi how glad I am that she was pleased with her reception in England.

Believe me, dear Sir, most sincerely, ever your most affectionate

FREDERICK.

* General Grenville, the Prince's companion, thus shortly after corroborates this :—"His Royal Highness," writes he, "desires to be particularly remembered to you, and all friends at Vienna. If he had the power of conveying himself, as quick as thought, wherever he wished, I should advise you to lose no time in dispatching cards, with all possible speed, to Mesdames Thun and Pergen, &c., for supper *this very evening!* But as we have no good-natured fairy to furnish us with supernatural powers, we must content ourselves with chewing the cud of your honour's good suppers (which is but poor amusement at all times, and more particularly as we have almost consumed our whole magazine—having been so often reduced to make use of this unsatisfactory resource), and with wishing you all health and happiness, from yours ever affectionately,

"R. GRENVILLE."

MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Park Place, 4th Sept., 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I am heartily grieved at the account you give me of your bad success with our ministers, on the interesting article of your *congé*, and think it mortifying that you, whom they find so useful in their negotiations, should have such difficulty in your own. There's no end of the evils, private and public, attending all political squabbles. It was among the laws of Sparta, or some wise Grecian state, that every citizen should take a part in all contests that were going on; but could a contrary injunction prevail, it would be well for the peace and happiness of mankind. There is an *old book*, little attended to, though well known, that teaches a very different doctrine. We are the children of peace by profession, and of discord by practice, and the whole system of mankind is a system of contention. One must leave the world actually to enjoy it, and if one has not great care, contention will follow even to our rural scenes. The pleasure of mutually tormenting seems the universal passion, and men affect it sometimes as completely about killing a hare, or the bounds of a dirty field, as about a kingdom. I have, I assure you, no such contentions, having, thank Heaven! no manorial rights, nor hunting district, like the wild Indians; so that, could we but catch you here, when your good stars shall consent to your retirement, and allow you to be *annihilated* like myself, you may pass a good peaceable sort of nonentity; so pray don't lose sight of your *castle*. You shall not want our assistance to build or realize it, and people live so much *in the air* now, it would be quite unfashionable to relinquish it.

Yours ever affectionately,

H. CONWAY.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Sept. 27th, 1785.

MY DEAR ANDREW,

I have not in many years received a letter which gave me so much heartfelt pleasure as yours of the 13th instant has done. It is written with that warmth of feeling and frankness of character which I hold so dear, and which render your friendship of inestimable value to me. I have nothing so much at heart in this world, as to cherish such sentiments in the minds of a few men of honour and truth, like yourself; and I swear to you, my dear Andrew, that there exists not upon earth a more cordial and deep-rooted attachment than that I feel for you in every sense and shape.

That I have not been a punctual correspondent of late, has been entirely owing to the uncertain and vexatious situation in which I have found myself for several months, both in regard to the public concerns and my own. I have (in common with most of my brother politicians) thought myself on the eve of an important crisis in Europe, which would either enkindle the flame of war on the Continent, or establish the public tranquillity upon such a solid basis, as to leave me master of my own time and actions. I have been drawn on, from week to week, in the hope of being able to hold to you a decisive language upon the *first* of these subjects, and to give you a just idea of my personal plans for the enjoyment of that leisure which a general pacification would procure me.

The slowness or the obstinacy of these *mad* Hollanders, (for mad they are, and ungrateful too, to the highest pitch,) have to this hour kept me in teazing suspense; and my only comfort is that matters have now been brought by the Emperor to the peremptory decision of a *yes* or *no*, which they must ere now

have pronounced: and which will be echoed through France to Vienna in the course of eight-and-forty hours. The courier charged with this important *monosyllable* (and probably with ten sheets of nonsense to elucidate and justify it) may, perhaps, be galloping at this moment into the walls of this capital; and you, my dear Andrew, who live next door to these doughty Burgomasters, are, no doubt, informed of their final resolution before this time. I was long in the belief that Old England was the only country in modern Europe where civil dissension was often called in by *staunch patriots* to enliven the dulness of foreign warfare! I see that the States of Holland take a pleasure in quarrelling among themselves, and in chasing away their hereditary benefactor, the Stadtholder, at the same instant that an incensed monarch, who has an army of three hundred thousand men, is drawing near to their frontiers. They have copied some parts of *our* late conduct very exactly; let us see if it will be with a success equal to that *we* had to boast of at the end of the last war.

I am much pleased with the sketch of what you believe to be Mr. Pitt's general plan, and I heartily wish him success in the pursuit of each of his favourite objects.

It appears to me by the last mail, that the Irish are beginning to feel, and to acknowledge, the necessity of accepting (though with some variation of phraseology) of the principal articles so *generously* proposed to them by Great Britain; and I trust that in the next session of Parliament, all will be properly adjusted, and to the mutual satisfaction and advantage of *both* kingdoms. Whoever opposes that agreement is an enemy to ***both.***

Wednesday, 28th.

I have purposely delayed the conclusion of this epistle, in hopes of receiving the long-wished-for

intelligence relative to the Dutch affairs. I am not, however, a bit wiser than I was yesterday, and no courier has yet arrived; let me, then, chat with you, keeping clear of all tiresome politics.

I am to have a prodigious colony of John Bulls this winter: Lords Wycombe, Ancram, Guildford, Glasgow, Dungannon, &c., &c., and commoners *by scores*. Alas! my poor Tweedale acres! but *their* fate has been long pronounced. I wish I had ten minutes' conversation with your young Minister; * I think I could convince him (and without a grain of self-sufficiency) that it can hardly be for the honour of government that a man who has sat twelve successive years at his post, endeavouring to render service to his country, and presenting in that space of time *four hundred* young gentlemen at the Imperial Court, should be driven to downright beggary. But, my dear Andrew, my superiors seem to know that poverty and I are upon terms of good fellowship, and can jog on cheerfully through the rest of our course. Be it so, if it must be so!

I did not plague my friends with a long dull account of my late narrow escape from drowning, because I never thought it would be *hitched* into a newspaper! The bursting of a kind of water-spout that day had indeed the most extraordinary effects,' and laid a whole tract of country under water in *less than an hour*. I found it extremely difficult to get through the torrents on horseback even next day, and it was attended with some danger. The man who *was* drowned was a perfect stranger to me—a butcher's servant who joined me on the road, and (so far from being my *guide*) he *followed* me through the first torrent, and perished in the second, whilst I was talking to some peasants on the opposite bank, and had no idea of making even the *attempt* to

* The interview, when obtained (in 1789), led *immediately* to the desired conclusion.

cross it. I helped to take his body out of the water, and had every chirurgical assistance brought to recover him, but all in vain. There is the story, my dear Andrew. A great many country people perished, but only this one in my view.* Adieu, ever yours,

R. M. K.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have learned that a courier is arrived from Paris, with news of the signature of preliminaries between the Emperor and Holland.

GENERAL WIMPFFEN TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Warsaw, 3rd Janvier, 1786.

VOTRE EXCELLENCE,

Comme je dois espérer, aura reçu la lettre que je pris la liberté de lui écrire, après l'imminent danger dont la Divine Providence l'a si *miraculeusement* sauvé; à laquelle, avec maintes autres, j'ai témoigné ma juste réconnoissance. Je supplie vôtre Excellence de vouloir aussi, en l'entrée de cette nouvelle carrière, reçevoir mes vœux de *gratitude*, que j'adresse au monarque de l'univers, pour la conservation précieuse de vôtre illustre personne; et d'être le récompenseur des bienfaits, aussi grands et aussi rares, dont il a plu à vôtre Excellence de me combler. Elles ont changé ma *misfortune* en bonheur, conservé mon honneur, et, bréf, il n'appartient qu'à des grandes âmes, rares comme celle

* The danger (on what excursion, to Carlsbad, or elsewhere, is not known) of which Sir Robert, partly from natural intrepidity makes so light, and which he had altogether considerately concealed from his English friends, must have been very *imminent*, to draw forth from a brother soldier, and a distinguished one, the following letter; the veneration and gratitude expressed in which, (and towards a fellow-mortal, almost verging on impiety), bear testimony to the magnitude of the obligations (totally unrecorded, even in the confidence of friendship, by himself) conferred on the writer by Sir R. M. Keith.

de vôtre Excellence, de faire des actions aussi nobles et généreuses comme celle qu'elle a fait sur moi. Pour encore plus graver ma *gratitude* sur mon âme, je possède l'illustre portrait de vôtre Excellence, toujours devant mes yeux, que j'adore comme un Dieu, qui honore les vertus; et je ne mourrai pas content si avant ma fin je ne deviens encore si fortuné pour avoir l'honneur d'envisager l'illustre originel. Que Dieu et votre Excellence me fassent cette grâce!

Nous n'avons point de nouvelles dans ce pays-ci, dignes des attentions de vôtre Excellence; sinon que le Roi de Prusse fait des préparations en ses troupes, qui annoncent que pour le printems, il a l'envie de quelque point nouveau. J'attendrai toujours par un bonheur inoui d'être honoré des ordres de vôtre Excellence, pour avoir celui de l'assurer de ma juste *gratitude*, et de la vénération profonde avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Son très humble, &c. &c.

BROWN.*

LETTER FROM BARON TRENCK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Zwerback, proche de Moelck, le 27 Janvier, 1786.

VÔTRE EXCELLENCE,

Le continu de celle-cy vous paraitra singulier. C'est un Allemand, un étranger, un avanturier, honnête homme; qui cherche la grandeur d'âme d'un Anglais. Je vous connais, my lord; vôtre respectable Père était déjà mon protecteur, et vous serez mon bienfaiteur dans un cas où je merite l'appui des sages et grands de mes contemporains. Au moins, je ne mériterai pas vôtre mépris, par ma confiance raisonnée. Je ne suis ni mendiant, ni trompeur, ni lâche. Je suis le sacrifice

* The worthy man, whose *gratitude* (a word he transplants into French, as well as *misfortune*) thus overflows, was, like many of the imperial generals, of British extraction.

le plus sanglant de ma franchise, et de ma vertu inébranlable; le jouet du sort humain, et la dupe d'un souverain ingrat.

L'explication de ma situation actuelle demande un volume; le-voicy en abrégé, pour ne pas ennuyer vôtre patience. J'ai acheté l'année 1779, une terre en Autriche, des débris de mon bien saccagé; pour jouir d'une vie tranquille jusqu'à la mort du Roi de Prusse, après laquelle je suis assuré de jouir un rôle brillant, en cas que l'ambition me fouetterait pour retourner dans le tourbillon du monde.

Depuis que je suis campagnard, j'ai essuyé deux fois une destruction totale par la grêle et trois inondations. Les chicanes de mes ennemis à Vienne ont achevé ma ruine; et me voici avec huit enfans, réduit quasi à la besace. L'Empereur m'attend à sa porte; mais mon sort ne dependra pas de sa digestion. J'ai des raisons pour refuser ses grâces; bien moins pour les chercher en rampant, parce qu'il m'a refusé mon droit, et manqué de parole.

J'ai donc entrepris un ouvrage littéraire, que j'ai annoncé en huit tomes par prémuneration, pour gagner mes besoins pour l'education de ma famille. Le premier tome a paru au 15 Janvier. Mais mes ennemis obtinrent de la censure une defense rigoureuse, avec punition de cent ducats contre l'imprimeur.

Me voilà donc dans un embarras sans égale. En honnête homme je dois payer pour le pauvre imprimeur, je dois rembourser les souscripteurs—et j'ai déjà employé 1200 florins dans l'ouvrage; le troisième tome étant déjà achevé. Il est vrai que cette entreprise me donnera un beau revenu dans l'empire, dans la Saxe, et les états Prussiens, mais il s'agit de ma disette actuelle; et nulle ressource à Vienne pour moi.

J'ai toujours écrit contre le despotisme, contre les fripons, et contre les moines. Dans chaque collège de

justice il y a toujours quelque fanatique, ou lâche; et voilà la source des persécutions que j'essayerai pour la vie en Autriche.

J'ai ruminé sur toutes les ressources possibles, dans ce moment critique qui presse. J'ai trouvé quelques remèdes; mais il me manque encore envers 400 ou 500 florins, sans lesquels mon mal est absolument insurmontable, et me force peutêtre de quitter l'uniforme, ma pension, ma famille, et l'Etat.

C'est donc à vous, my lord, qui je m'adresse.* Soyez mon père, mon bienfaiteur! En cas de mèpris, de nonchalance, ou de refus, ne me donnez aucune réponse, je ne vous respecterai pas moins, n'ayant aucune droit pour exiger votre générosité. Mais, si vous connaissez une partie de mon sort marâtre; si vous pénétrez dans le fond de mon âme dans ce moment où je me trouve forcé d'implorer votre secours, mettez ce que vous voulez risquer pour moi dans une lettre blanche, en papier de banque, avec les mots "Pour le Baron Trenck," et sur l'adresse "À Monsieur Vigand, Caffétier." Vous ne serez pas trompé. J'engage ma parole sacrée de vous rembourser après la foire de Leipzig, au premier d'Avril. Si je vous trompe, vous ne serez pas pauvre, et Trenck aura cessé d'être honnête homme. Lorsque vous me tirerez d'embarras, et que je vous aurai l'obligation de m'avoir soutenu dans mes catastrophes, mes actions prouveront combien j'étais digne d'être,

De vôtre Excellence,
Le plus humble et devoué serviteur,
FREDERICK BARON TRENCK, Major.

* This letter, from the celebrity of its writer, has been selected from hosts of similar appeals; seldom, it would appear, addressed in vain to one whose generosity far outstripped his means.

SIR JOSEPH YORKE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, April 21st, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Give me leave to recommend to your obliging countenance and protection the bearer hereof, my old schoolfellow, Mr. John Howard of Cardington, Bedfordshire, one of the most singular and humane characters of the age; whose unwearied pains and travels to endeavour to put our jails and workhouses on a better footing cannot be unknown to you. The parliament, and indeed the voice of the nation, speak his merit, and he has a right to the assistance of every one of us.

He desires to get all the information he can relative to the prisons and workhouses at Vienna, and elsewhere in the Austrian dominions; and the encouragement and good reception he has met with everywhere make one hope that he may be allowed to inquire into the regulations of the Austrian police relative to these objects. He is *certainly no spy*, but a worthy man of great family; and his only view is to be of some service in the cause of humanity. Our friend, Mr. William Eden, is a great friend of his, and pursues the same object.

I shall be much obliged to you for any civilities you shew, or any service you can do to Mr. Howard, and I remain, with unalterable esteem and affection, my dear sir, your most faithful and devoted servant,

JOSEPH YORKE.*

* The visit took place in the end of the year. A young Englishman thus mentions it :—"Sir Robert has lately been much taken up by a countryman of a very different description from those who usually frequent this place. It is the celebrated Mr. Howard, who has spent some days here from Turkey, and other places where the plague is frequent, in order to endeavour to discover some method to arrest the progress of that dreadful malady. He is at present in good health, but much attenuated. He takes no food but dry bread and tea, as he finds extreme temperance the best preservative against infection."

COUNT ROSENBERG, IMPERIAL CHAMBERLAIN, TO SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH,

(APPOINTING A PRIVATE AUDIENCE FOR MR. HOWARD).

25 *Fev.*, 1786.

MONSIEUR,

L'Empéreur désirant voir le célèbre Monsieur Howard, et sachant qu'il n'aime pas les cérémonies des cours, me charge de vous prier de faire savoir à cet ami des hommes, qu'il pourra se rendre à la Chancellerie de sa Majesté sur le Controler-gang, aujourd'hui, ou demain, à une heure après-midi. Il y aura quelqu'un à la porte, qui l'introduira immédiatement.

Je vous prie de me faire savoir si Monsieur Howard veindra aujourd'hui, ou demain; et de me croire avec un parfait devouement,

ROSENBERG.

MR. HOWARD TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

March 15*th*, 1786.

PERMIT me to make my grateful acknowledgments for the kind attention shown me during my stay at Vienna; a sense of the honour there done me will ever be a source of pleasure and gratitude.

I sent about ten days ago to Mr. Wiffin my last publication, requesting your acceptance of it, also a copy for Count Pergen, and Dr. Ingenhouz, and this day a book for a corner in the Emperor's library. The plans for the Lazaretto are engraving, but it will be the end of the year before I publish. I shall forward some of the first to your Excellency.

With great regard and much esteem, I am, Sir,

Your most obedient and obliged servant,

JOHN HOWARD.

PRINCE ADAM CZARTORISKI TO SIR R. M. KEITH.*

Pulawy, 3rd April, 1786.

THE kind expressions of your letter of the 11th March cannot but raise the highest sense of pleasure and gratitude in a heart which, on so many good reasons, has contracted long ago (and will preserve for ever) the habit of loving and honouring you.

Lord Wycombe's and Major Green's trip to Pulawy is highly acceptable both to me and my family, at the time intended. In my answer to Lord Wycombe (which, according to permission, I put under your cover) I give the most exact directions what road they are to follow from Cracow. If cordiality, and the real pleasure they will give us in coming to take a peep at our country, can make up for the inconveniences they are likely to meet with, I hope they won't be altogether sorry to have undertaken the journey. Your mentioning that you would not dislike to be of the party, raises in my mind a train of ideas which I am loth to part with, as with a delightful dream. In this particular, I can only be sorry that my house is too much out of the way to be pitched upon as the place fit for a negotiation, or the signing of a treaty. I beg you will be thoroughly convinced that no man upon earth sets a greater value than I do on your friendship and esteem, and that I am inviolably for ever, my dearest sir,

Your faithful friend and most obedient servant,

ADAM CZARTORISKI.

Give me leave to send my best compliments to Mr. Straton, and to Arbuthnot.

* This letter, which does equal honour to the kindness of heart and *uncommon proficiency in English* of the noble writer, derives additional interest from the expression of sentiments of friendship hereditary on both sides; previous effusions of which, addressed to Mr. Keith, Sir Robert's father, have been inserted.

LORD DARLINGTON TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Cleveland House, May 7th, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is not easy to decide whether the father or the son are most flattered by your friendly attention, neither perhaps is it necessary. They both feel themselves highly indebted, and equally wish to prove their sense of the favour you confer. I venture to say *they*, because I can answer for myself; and my son, in a letter of the 22nd of last month, says, "I respect, adore, and love Sir Robert Keith, and wish I could ever possibly in any way be serviceable to him"—consequently 'tis evident your kindness has had its due weight, and I hope he will continue to deserve your countenance. Youth sometimes will swerve from the right path, but you, dear Sir Robert, who have so long been conversant with the world, will, I am sensible, be indulgent enough to make allowances.

The King knighted Lord Cornwallis the evening before his departure, in the most gracious manner possible, not one person present; at the same time acquainting him he had delayed it till that moment, that it might not be insinuated that the blue ribbon was the lure for the acceptance of the command he had undertaken.* Our Chancellor is recovered, who was for two days thought in the utmost danger.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient humble servant,

DARLINGTON.

* This delicacy in the monarch must have been dictated by the same feeling which prompted him to grant the investiture to Sir R. M. Keith, when in Denmark, by *anticipation*, "in order," he said, "to distinguish merit, independent of success."

SIR JOHN SEBRIGHT TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Beechwood, 10th August, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I do not know how to thank you as I ought for your kindness to me, and your kind intentions (still more precious) to my beloved son. These, my dear friend, are essential obligations, that if I know my heart I shall never forget, even if the affections of that heart had not already been yours; nor can Lady Sebright or I ever forget the honour and pleasure we received when my old and respectable friend, your father, gloriously supported by his two sons, was an inhabitant of this place. But somewhat too much of this. My dear son will have the honour to deliver himself and these credentials into the hands of my dear friend, Sir Robert Keith. With his milk he sucked in an affection for you and your family, which literally grew with his growth, and has been strengthened by Drummonds, Campbells, and the Lord knows who: for whenever he chances to say he is about to set out for Vienna, then your Excellency, and your several virtues, such as they are, as well as your kind attention to our countrymen, become the subject, not ungrateful to him who is about to avail himself of them!

My hand shakes, (for I am old), and I am going to the Drawing-room, with Lady Sebright, to assure their Majesties that *we* did not instigate our quondam housemaid, Margaret Nicholson,* to attempt his sacred life, which may God preserve! Lord Frederick showed me your last letter, which was as warm as that to me. Sebright sets out to-morrow; I commit him to your goodness and his own discretion; and now, my dear

* A mad woman, who fired a pistol at King George the Third.

and much-valued friend, Sir Robert, I remain, with great respect and attachment,

Your for ever faithful and obliged,

J. SEBRIGHT.

THE DUKE OF YORK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hanover, Sept. 22nd, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I have many thanks to return you for your very obliging and confidential letter, which came safely to my hands. It was so long since I had had the pleasure of hearing from you, that I really was afraid you had quite forgotten me. I did not dare to answer it till now, that I avail myself of Monsieur Walmoden setting off for Vienna to write to you fully. The death of the King of Prussia made many people imagine we should very soon have a war. I confess I never was of that opinion, as you were so good as to inform me that it was not the wish of the Emperor; and I knew that the present King of Prussia was by no means desirous of drawing the sword. The manner in which he has began his reign does the greatest honour to his head and to his heart; and I daresay you will already be aware of what I told you when I had the pleasure of passing some very agreeable weeks with you at Vienna—that the world has been totally mistaken in this Prince. He has declared openly his attachment for England, and for an English alliance; and has given the strongest proofs of his sincerity in this respect by the manner in which he has received all the proposals of his uncle Prince Henry, who did, at first, everything in his power to persuade him into trying to gain over France. Indeed he is besides exceedingly angry with France, on account of the affairs of Holland. I have been told that there is almost a certainty of a

war between the Russians and Turks; and that the Emperor does not intend to give any assistance to his ally the Empress. This, if really the case, will naturally break the great friendship which has for some time subsisted between the imperial courts; and which has alarmed all the rest of Europe so much. I will not add more on these subjects, on which you are so much better informed, but end by assuring you how sincerely I am, dear sir, most faithfully yours,

FREDERICK.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, February 17th, 1787.

You are always the same warm-hearted and active friend, and I assure you, my dear Andrew, that I look upon your cordial attachment as one of the most valuable blessings of my life. Heartily sorry am I that I am not permitted to cultivate it, in the parish of St. Martin's; but this is likely to be a year of turmoil and trouble, in more quarters than one, and what with vapouring Turks and Russians on one hand, and frantic Hollanders on the other, I must not think of indulging my private wishes for the present. Other gentlemen of my cloth would perhaps think that a little haze in the wind's eye is not a sufficient reason for postponing personal enjoyments. But I have a *way of my own* in thinking of public duty; and my excellent friends of the "*Gang*" will not think the worse of me for it. Remember, my dear Andrew, that in mentioning the clouds I see hovering on the horizon, I am far from predicting a dangerous storm. These clouds may blow over, as a hundred others have done before; and at all events, I have the happiness to be persuaded that the British galley may remain in port, and keep clear of

the squall, let it blow from what corner it may! So much for enigmatical politics!

The Empress of Russia's journey must necessarily make a great noise in Europe, and the hundred thousand soldiers who attend the progress may perhaps make some stir in Turkey. We suppose that she arrived at Kiew on the 16th instant, and we expect letters from thence every hour. The Emperor will probably set out before the middle of March, and (without a single soldier to attend him) will probably join her at *Cherson*, in the end of April. Oh! that he would tell a body, when he comes back, what he has seen and heard.

Yours truly,

R. M. K.

The above exclamation it is impossible to avoid echoing, notwithstanding the amusing volumes in which the witty Prince de Ligne has embodied the *memorabilia* of the brilliant Crimean progress; which, a mere matter of fact letter, dated *Cherson* (from Mr. Fitzherbert, who accompanied the Empress as British minister), informs Sir R. Keith was by no means productive of the same enthusiasm on the Emperor's part, as the interview of the sovereigns some years before.

Equally impossible is it to avoid regretting the unfortunate destruction of Sir Robert Keith's letters to his own family during the whole reign of a man, with whom he enjoyed (from his simple unostentatious habits, and avowed predilection for the British envoy) the most unrestrained facilities of intercourse. We learn (from the MS. journal of the same traveller, so often before quoted) that Joseph was in the habit of dropping in frequently at Madame de Pergen's (where Sir Robert Keith passed most of his evenings) with so little state or ceremony, as not even to interrupt the game at "Ombre" which his hostess and her guests might be

engaged in. "And on these occasions" (adds the narrator, rather tantalisingly,) "the Emperor would laugh heartily with the young ladies, and tell a number of excellent stories." Most of these have been lost to posterity, as well as the particulars of a facetious conversation, occurring on an occasion when the same gentleman* was present. One of them, however, has since been recovered, and is well worth narrating:—"The Emperor related a circumstance which had just happened, and which amused us very much. One of the town prisons had been pulled down; a man purchased the ground where it stood; built a house and shop there, and put the Emperor's head for a sign. The magistrates of the town, thinking it disgraceful that his Imperial Majesty's head should be exposed in a place where malefactors had been confined, ordered it to be taken down. The man went to the Emperor, and complained of the expense he had been at, in having so fine a sign-post painted, and thought it hard it should be thrown away. The Emperor did not choose to contradict the magistrates; but he told the man to put a beard on the face, and a glory round the head, which would change it to *Saint* Joseph. This was accordingly done; I have since seen it, and I declare that I think none of the pictures done for the Emperor are so like him as the sign in its present state." The following account of the writer's public introduction, and other graphic particulars of the mode of life at Vienna, may serve to atone to the reader for the loss of similar anecdotes from Sir Robert's own pen.

"Last Sunday Sir Robert Keith presented me and the other English gentlemen here to the Emperor. We were eleven in number, and the suite of carriages

* The accomplished and lamented R. Arbuthnot, Esq., afterwards Colonial Secretary at Ceylon, and brother to the late Sir W. Arbuthnot.

which followed Sir Robert's, made it look like the procession of an ambassador making his first visit. We found the antechamber pretty crowded, it being the first time the Emperor has seen company since his return from Italy. We found him standing alone, dressed as he always is, in uniform. The only ceremony at entrance, is making a low bow. I do not pretend to judge of the other qualities of the Emperor, but he certainly has as much the look and manners of a gentleman as any person I ever saw. He is a very well looking man, middle sized, with fair hair, and very light blue eyes. He has something so good-natured and frank in his appearance and behaviour, that one feels perfectly easy in his company, and even has a desire to enter into conversation with him. He seemed very glad to see Sir Robert again, and inquired very particularly about his health. He asked us from whence we came, if directly from England, or after having made the tour of Europe; said he hoped we would make a long stay at Vienna, and would amuse ourselves well while we remained.

"It being St. Thomas's-day the Emperor dined in public with the knights of the order of Maria-Theresa, instituted by the late Empress as a reward for military merit. It is something like that of St. Louis in France, but more honourable, as confined to a smaller number, and can be given to nobody in time of peace. It is divided into grand crosses, commanders, and simple knights; the grand crosses only dine in the same room with the Emperor. There are at present only four of them, all officers of great and distinguished character—Marshals Haddick, Laudohn, Lacy, and Nadasti; and it is singular enough, that not one of them is a German; for Lacy is an Irishman, Laudohn (though born in Livonia) of a Scotch family, and the other two are Hungarians. The Emperor seemed to be in high

spirits, but did not eat a bit of an exceeding good dinner which was set before him. As soon as he sat down, he called Sir Robert Keith to stand by his chair, and *kept talking and laughing with him* all the time of dinner. He said, among other things, how happy a sovereign might think himself to have four such generals as those he saw before him; and added, that he was ashamed to think he was the only person present who had got that ribbon without having done anything to deserve it."

As a contrast to the stiff and magnificent entertainments which, to the young (though already far travelled and superior minded) observer, seemed intolerably tedious, the following particulars are given of the free, unceremonious style of living, even under the Emperor's roof, among the *élite* of Viennese society who formed his country circle:—"The Emperor is gone for three weeks to Laxemberg, and Vienna is quite dull in consequence, for he has carried off with him all the most agreeable people in town. Twenty gentlemen and twelve ladies have accompanied him; and Madame de Thun and her two daughters are of the latter number. They pass their time in the pleasantest manner possible; and there is not the slightest constraint. All lodge in the palace, but are as much at home as if they were in their own houses. All do as they choose in the mornings, but dine and sup together at two tables; at either of which the Emperor, as it happens, takes his seat."

"A circumstance took place last night which will surprise those who look upon Vienna as the seat of form and etiquette. There was a fire-work in the Prater, which finished about ten o'clock. Twelve gentlemen and ladies of the very highest rank in this country, who met there, went afterward to sup in one of the little *guinguettes*, where the common people amuse themselves. They remained there till midnight,

when, as the night was remarkably fine, one of the company proposed that, instead of going to bed, they should immediately set out for Laxemberg, and pay a visit to Madame de Thun. This plan being agreed to, they got a common waggon, into which they all packed themselves. Prince Louis Lichtenstein, who was one of the party, took four horses from his carriage and put them to it. Another gentleman drove; and in this equipage they got to Laxemberg about two in the morning, drove straight up to the palace, made so much noise as to awaken every body, and having raised Madame de Thun from her bed, remained with her until day-break, when they returned to Vienna, and went through the streets in their cart, to the astonishment of all who saw them. I believe you will allow that there is no other Court in Europe where people could take such liberty." *

The general style of winter society in Vienna is thus described:—"Every night in the week there is an assembly somewhere. They begin about nine o'clock after the play, and people converse or walk about till eleven. Then comes supper, which is generally very splendid; indeed the great nobility live here in a style of magnificence, of which in England we have no idea. I have already dined or supped at Count Hatzfeldt's, Prince Galitzin's, the Marquis de Noiailles', Prince

* The toleration here of similar harmless frolics, and prevalence of another similar amusement styled a *Barouchade*, in which, in the carriages newly invented under that name, large parties of the *élite* of Vienna drove out into the villages round the neighbourhood, to walk about, *drink milk*, and dance under the trees, may serve to account for that indulgence in rural pleasures, and what were in France styled undignified recreations, so fatal to the Emperor's sister, poor Marie-Antoinette. It is a curious coincidence that the writer who narrates their perfect impunity at Vienna, should have been an *eye-witness* and narrator also (in letters to Sir R. M. Keith) of the first calamitous events of the French Revolution.

Paar's, Prince Colloredo's, and Prince Kaunitz's. I was very desirous to see this last great politician, who, for thirty-five years, has governed the German empire with absolute authority. He is a man of superior abilities, and one of the first statesmen that ever existed; but he is at least as much distinguished for his singularities and oddities as for his genius and talents. He is remarkably cold and inattentive to strangers, sometimes scarcely deigning to speak to them; but his respect for Sir Robert Keith makes him tolerably civil to every person who is presented by him. The common hour of dining at Vienna is half-past two, and nobody dines after three; but the rules which are made for the common run of mankind are not in the least observed by Prince Kaunitz. He never sits down to table until past five, and very often not till night. This circumstance is very inconvenient, as nobody can know at what time to go to him. The day I first dined there, the company were assembled at half-past five, and it was past seven before he made his appearance, and he never thought of making any apology."

THE DUKE OF YORK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hanover, July 1*st*, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I am quite ashamed of not having sooner answered your last very obliging letter, but for those last two months I have been so continually travelling about, that it really has not been in my power to return you all the thanks I owe for the very interesting intelligence which your letter contained. I am, I confess, exceedingly anxious to know how the interview between the Emperor and Empress of Russia has gone off. The meeting between those two great personages will cause great alarm all over Europe. The last time they met,

the great projects which have frightened Germany so much were first brought upon the carpet, and every body here fears this interview is intended to bring them to maturity. His Imperial Majesty has, however, at present, his hands full; and it appears as if it would be no easy matter to bring the Flanderkins to rights again.

I passed my time very agreeably at Berlin, and cannot sufficiently express how much I was flattered by the very distinguished manner in which the King behaved towards me. This day three weeks I shall set out upon my return home. It is not necessary, I am sure, to express to you how impatient I am to return, as it is near seven long years since I left England.

Give me leave to assure you, that it is always with the greatest pleasure that I think of the very agreeable time which I passed at Vienna, which was certainly owing to the very great civilities and attentions which I received from you; and I shall be most exceedingly happy if at any time it is in my power to be of use to you, and to prove to you how sincerely I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,

FREDERICK.

P.S.—Is there any probability of our meeting in Old England?

SIR RALPH PAYNE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Lyons, November 1st, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Your memory is as excellent, and as much to be depended on, in offices of friendship, as it is in events of history;* nor has it ever been more an object of

* The extensive acquaintance with historical events and characters here alluded to, had earned for Sir R. M. Keith, it would seem, from the

admiration upon the latter occasion, than it is of Lady Payne's * and my very affectionate gratitude upon the former. If our feelings on all your friendly and uniform attentions to us while at, or since we have left Vienna, were a circumstance of the least degree of value to you, I would take some pains to express them; but as they can be of no further importance to you than that of giving you the satisfaction of knowing that you have not been lavishing your friendship on objects who are not duly sensible of its worth, I leave the proofs of our desert of it to the test of time, which we trust, will not for ever leave us destitute of the power of displaying them.

If I make no attempt to describe to you our sentiments on this occasion, it is because I know myself unequal to the task; and because we entertain the most confident dependance on your adding one more act

following extract, an European reputation, founded on his skilful practice (some say invention) of a *Jeu de Societé*, since a favourite one with the late Mr. Canning, under the name of the "*Twelve*," or "*Twenty Questions;*" by the skilful proposing of which, Sir Robert was enabled to guess the minutest particular connected with the most recondite personage mentioned in sacred or secular history. A friend from Paris thus writes:—"A few days ago, I happened to be in company with some French *Savans*, when one of them (Monsieur Suard) hearing that I had been at Vienna, asked me if I knew anything of your talent for *guessing*, of which he had often heard, and which he did not at all comprehend. I told him that I had been witness to it twenty times; and had myself more than once proposed things to you which I thought extremely difficult, but which you had discovered with the greatest ease. As everybody seemed most desirous of knowing how you proceeded, and I recollected the questions you asked of Monsieur de Souza, by which you guessed *Don Juan de Castro's whiskers*, I repeated them. This only served to increase their astonishment; and every person allowed that the whole forty members of the French Academy could not do as much."

* The lady, in whose house in Grafton-street, Lord Chancellor Erskine, on her being taken ill, wrote the well-known couplet—

"'Tis true I am ill, but I need not complain,
For he never knew pleasure, who never knew *Payne*."

Sir Ralph Payne afterwards became Lord Lavington.

of friendship to the numberless others we have experienced from you, by persuading yourself that we are destitute of no one sentiment for you which the heartiest gratitude, the sincerest respect, and the most affectionate attachment can inspire. God bless you, my dear Sir, in every step, wish, and circumstance of your life! May fortune strew your path with her choicest gifts, go where you will. I speculate that your first *going* will be to England; and though I pretend to very little intuition into the womb of futurity, the interest which I take in your horoscope tempts me to hazard a guess what will happen when our ministers at home lay their hands upon you!

Apropos of such subjects. When I was at Zurich, where I staid a couple of days, I paid a visit to, and spent two or three hours each day with Lavater; and I will annex a memorandum which I copied from his note-book, on Charles Fox's physiognomy, which he had an opportunity of examining about a couple of months ago, at Berne, where he met him accidentally. Fox has this autumn been making a tour of Switzerland; whence he went by Milan to Turin, and I expect him here every hour. Adieu, dear Sir; that every real good, and pleasant accessory may attend you, is the sincere wish of

Your very faithful and affectionate servant,

RALPH PAYNE.

PHYSIOGNOMY OF MR. FOX BY LAVATER.

Front—Inépuisable; plus de richesse d'idées, et d'images, que je n'ai jamais vu peint sur *aucune physionomie au monde.*

Sourcils—Superbes, regnants, dominants.

Nez—Médiocre.

Les Yeux—Remplis de génie, perçans, fascinants, magiques.

Les Joues—Sensuels.

Bouche—Pleine d'une volubilité surprenante et agréable; et le bas du visage doux, affable, sociable. (LAVATER, Pinxit.)

MR. ARBUTHNOT TO SIR R. M. KEITH.*

Paris, July 28th, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Your letter of the 21st only reached me yesterday; the delivery of letters for some time past has been very irregular, which, indeed, is not much to be wondered at.

The revolution in the French constitution and government, may now, I think, be looked upon as completed, beyond all fear of any further attempt being made by the Court party, to defeat it. The entrance of the King into Paris was certainly one of the most humiliating steps that could possibly be taken. He was actually led in triumph, like a tame bear, by the Deputies and the city militia. The whole party inimical to the rights of the people, are dispersed. The Count d'Artois and his whole family, (except the Countess, who is much beloved,) the Condès, Contis, Polignacs, Bréteuils, and Vaudreuils, &c.—are all fled; and people are talking of confiscating their estates. The news we have from the provinces are much more favourable than could have been expected. Everywhere the people and the soldiers seem to have been animated with the same spirit. In Brittany, where the greatest apprehensions were entertained, the soldiers refused to obey their officers, and many of them joined the

* A series of letters, from the same gentleman to Sir R. M. Keith, detailing from day to day the events and progress of the no longer solitary French Revolution, had been laid aside; as affording, inevitably, from the voluminous chronicles already published, no new matter on an exhausted subject. The striking coincidences, however, occurring in these unstudied epistles, between its first steps and those of that *third* convulsion, which we have recently witnessed, has suggested the insertion of one of them, which (but for the "shadow with a kingly crown," which it still represents as existing upon sufferance) might be read as a newspaper paragraph of 1848!

people. Fifty thousand Bretons were in arms, ready to march to the assistance of the Parisians; and there is no doubt that if the King had not come round, they would not have left a nobleman's house standing in the whole province. There certainly never was an instance of so astonishing a revolution operated *almost without bloodshed;* and without the people being led on by any leader or any party, but merely by the general diffusion of reason and philosophy.

We shall soon be able to form a guess of what is the nature of the constitution that is intended to be adopted in France. A committee of *eight members* is chosen to form a plan, which will afterwards be laid before the whole assembly for its approbation. The three persons who will probably have the greatest share in this important work, are Monsieur Mounier, the Abbé Sièyes, and the Count de Clermont Tonnerre, all three men of first-rate abilities. From what is known of their ideas and principles, it is thought the executive power will be left solely to the King, who will be deprived of all share in the legislative authority, which will be lodged in the National Assembly, formed into one body, without distinction of orders. Another particular in which it is thought the French constitution will differ essentially from ours, will be to have a power in the state superior to that of the National Assembly, by leaving to the *people,* in great and important points, the right of controlling the proceedings of their representatives, as in the United States. Several years must pass over, before we can judge of the *advantages* or *disadvantages* of such a form of government.

P.S.—A friend of mine (on whose opinion I place reliance,) Vice-president of one of the districts, has just come to me, and advised me to leave Paris without delay. A number of ridiculous reports have been

propagated, of the English giving money to the mob, with a view of increasing the disturbances. Although inclined to think my informant's apprehensions groundless, yet, in consideration of those which may be felt by the friends of Sir John B., I shall follow the advice; I have accordingly ordered post-horses, and shall *be off in an hour*. Yours, &c.,

R. A.

MR. HOWARD TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Petersburgh, September 8th, 1789.

SIR,

I hope your Excellency is well. Since I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have visited Amsterdam, Osnaburgh, Hanover, Berlin, Riga, &c., &c. I leave this city for Moscow next week. I stop there about a fortnight and proceed to Warsaw, Presburg, and Trieste. All intercourse with Turkey is now finally stopped at the Black Sea.

I receive, by your letter, all possible attention from Mr. Whitworth, who has been so kind as to procure me a courier's pass, by which I go smoothly on, without stopping for horses; which is often the case when there are ten or twelve in the stable at the post-houses.

I would, Sir, request a pass for myself and one English servant, which will enable me to pass with more security and comfort through the Emperor's country.

With the truest esteem and regard,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

JOHN HOWARD.

The following, and concluding letter, derives a melancholy interest from being, if not the last, probably one of the very last, ever penned by the philanthropic writer:—

MR. HOWARD TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Cherson, November 23d, 1789.

SIR,

I have received your kind letter with the passport. Had I come by Presburg, I should have thought it my duty to pay my respects to your Excellency; but I found the hospitals in sad disorder in the north of Russia, and being assured that 70,000 recruits, sailors and soldiers, died in them last year, determined me to visit the army and navy hospitals in the south. Here, I find them much worse; and 265 died at Wilowska, out of about 1500, last month.

I purpose next month, making the tour of the Crimea, and staying at Sevastopol some weeks, as the marine hospital is there; and shall take the first opportunity of crossing into Turkey. This country wants the zeal and attention of the Emperor, in whose success and happiness I exult. With much esteem, and my grateful acknowledgments for your very kind and constant attention,

I have the pleasure to subscribe myself, &c., &c.,

JOHN HOWARD.

In closing with the above remarkable letter, the series of Sir R. M. Keith's miscellaneous correspondence, the editor can only regret that more ample materials for selection than the fragmentary portions, and detached specimens alone preserved, were not at her command.

Had the unbroken correspondence of the writer with his own family been extant, instead of a few scattered epistles, which seem to have owed their preservation chiefly to the buoyancy of the lighter matters of which they treat—many anecdotes regarding persons, and remarks concerning events occurring in Austria, now discreetly suppressed, might have ministered amusement to the curiosity of the reader.

But in drawing it may, perhaps, be thought too freely, on the scanty relics treasured by the affection of a few faithful friends of "sixty years ago," the editor has at least the satisfaction of reflecting, that no sentiment has found a place not calculated either to enhance respect or create regard for its long unconscious writer; or to throw light, in some one or other of its various phases, on a character whose like the widely-altered features of society make improbable we shall ever look upon again. This last opinion, it is believed, the graver succeeding portion of the work (embracing Sir R. M. Keith's inedited political transactions) will rather verify than disprove.

The journey of Sir R. Murray Keith to his native country in 1788-9, not, as we have seen him frequently anticipate, on an excursion of pleasure, to recruit his jaded spirits among a chosen set of friends, but to vindicate, by *vivâ voce* representations, his own honour and that of the service he had so deeply at heart, from a course of official neglect which he had long vainly deprecated in writing, forms an episode so truly illustrative of his character, that its personal nature would scarcely justify even an uninterested biographer for withholding it. On one, with whom the earnest and truthful delineation of the man, yet more than of the minister, is a paramount consideration, it seems imperative to contrast the prevailing *bonhommie* and good humour which formed such prominent features in the character of Sir R. M. Keith, with the keen, yet dignified assertion of his public and private rights, which circumstances, happily rare, could call forth; to prove what the general strain of his correspondence might have led some almost to doubt, that he who, as had been said of him while in Denmark, could "browbeat one queen in rescue of another," could beard a minister

(one, too, with whom he had lived for years in private as well as public good fellowship) when his own honour and his master's interests were at stake.

Nor, firm, determined, nay bold, perhaps, beyond ministerial precedent, as was the tenor of those communications, (whose anomalous nature, at once official and personal, will serve as a transition link between the private and public portions of the present correspondence) is it less honourable to either party—the official superior or the remonstrating envoy—that when all had ended triumphantly to the satisfaction of the latter, no leaven of remaining bitterness seems—spite of an encounter of words so sharp and menacing—to have lingered in the breast of the party addressed with such unministerial boldness. That, with the occasion, all trace of it vanished from the kind, frank nature of the writer, none who have read his heart in his letters, can for a moment doubt.

The minister under whom Sir R. M. Keith was at this time serving (the *tenth* Secretary of State, with whom his twenty-seven years of diplomatic life had brought him in contact) was the Marquis of Caermarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds; who, like all his predecessors, had testified towards Sir Robert not merely uniform approbation and a high appreciation of his political conduct, but a warmth of personal intimacy, which a few familiar epistles, of a nature rarely emanating from Downing Street, survive to attest.

Whether, however, from constitutional indolence, or that absorption in the interests of party at home, to which Walpole and others remark the foreign relations of England to have been frequently sacrificed, her representative at the Court of Vienna (happily for her and himself no novice) was frequently left for months together without a word in answer to his voluminous and valuable dispatches, or a ray of light as to the views and intentions of government, to guide his steps

through the crooked and perplexing mazes of Austrian politics. His complaints on this subject, however well-founded, partook for long of his wonted good humour and forbearance; nor did these, be it observed, even while offensively disregarded, abate one jot of the zeal and minuteness with which he continued to forward information of the utmost importance in the then critical state of Europe.

Of the quality and value of these communications, the specimen, perhaps, most acceptable to the reader, will be found in the dispatch containing the graphic record of one of the frequent confidential conversations which the Emperor Joseph, during his whole reign, was in the habit of holding with the British Envoy; who, having hailed the auspicious dawn of a sway from which so much was, alas! in vain, anticipated, had retained a predilection for the man long after he had ceased to approve the monarch.

How soon the halcyon prospects held out by the accession of Joseph were clouded by his precipitate attempts to press on his subjects unwelcome reforms, and how totally they were obscured by his later efforts to force those innovations at the point of the bayonet, is too well known.

But perhaps volumes—and these have been written on the subject—could not better paint the anomalies of the Prince's character, the results of a narrow and despotic education, blending with the headlong adoption of every crude and untried theory of modern innovation—than they exhibit themselves in a conversation, which, while it evinces the spirit of tyranny, which resistance to his plans had by this period developed and matured, does justice at the same time to the sincerity of purpose with which they were viewed as beneficial by their author.

Joseph, it may be mentioned, then fresh from his recent brilliant progress through the Crimea with his

favourite ally, the Empress Catherine — courted by France—flushed with the expected submission of his revolted Flemish subjects—and about to set out on a campaign of anticipated triumph over the Turks (the fatigues and disasters of which, on the contrary, combined with the disappointment of his political projects, to give his yet unbroken health a blow from which it never recovered), held perhaps for the last time, in this interview, the haughty and exulting language, which adverse events, and the approach of the great teacher, Death, led him, happily for himself and his subjects, to retract, during the last hours of a lingering and painful, but firmly supported, illness.

[*Most Secret.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, August 3rd, 1787.

My Lord,

On Sunday last, I had the honour to present three English gentlemen to the Emperor. At the moment when he dismissed them, I took occasion to mention to the monarch a book which I had sent him the day before from the worthy and beneficent Mr. Howard, relating to the improvement of public prisons and hospitals.

As soon as my countrymen had left the Emperor's closet, and I found myself alone with him, I asked his leave to acquit myself of a commission which I had in express charge from my sovereign. The Emperor said "by all means," and in the most affable manner he led me by the arm to the upper end of the room. I then expressed to his Imperial Majesty (in an almost literal translation into French of the phrases contained in your lordship's dispatch) the very friendly sentiments of his Majesty; his real concern for the actual troubles in the Low Countries, and his wish that no evil consequences

arising out of them, may disturb the prosperity of the Emperor's reign, or weaken his power.

I saw very visibly, by the Emperor's countenance, that this message gave him sincere pleasure. He again laid hold of my arm, and said, "I am greatly obliged to the King for a declaration so amiable, and I desire you to make known to your sovereign the just sense I entertain of its value. His Britannic Majesty knows, by his own experience, that it is the unhappy lot of monarchs to see their upright intentions frequently misapprehended, their views wilfully misconstrued, and their principles calumniated. He has seen the subjects of his distant dominions abandon their duty and allegiance, from false notions of liberty, and through the instigations of factious, selfish, and artful men. What have they gained,—even by the success of their audacious enterprise?—only anarchy and confusion.

"I have lately seen my subjects in the Netherlands on the very brink of open rebellion, from the frantic adoption of views which have been artfully and incessantly instilled into their minds by designing lawyers, bigotted priests, and a few men of higher birth, who are new-fangled dabblers in what *they* call patriotism. The feebleness of my government in the Low Countries had, by timid and unwarrantable concessions, in a manner encouraged the arrogant demands of my subjects, and by yielding a ready consent to every encroachment on my rights, the governors at length left to the Flemish leaders no other difficulty save that of *inventing* new pretensions. The only excuse those governors offered for their conduct was the solemn asseveration, repeated in every dispatch, that *this*, and *this*, and *this* must be conceded; otherwise the Low Countries would be inevitably and irrecoverably lost to the House of Austria. *I* never felt that danger; I never foresaw, and still less confirmed the concessions which, being

granted by persons invested with no sort of authority to relinquish any of the rights of sovereignty, are in themselves *null and void*. The steps I have already taken, have in some degree opened the eyes of the Flemish nation, and I trust that I shall be able to bring them back to reason and justice. I am sensible that it is an arduous task, and I am unwilling to flatter myself *too soon;* but certainly, with the hearty desire of sparing fools and detecting knaves, I hope to convince the Flemish that I meant them no harm, and that an equitable line ought to be drawn between legal prerogative and constitutional principles."

All this was said very rapidly; and the Emperor, changing the subject, proceeded as follows:—"Your sovereign has a good deal of work on his hands in a neighbouring quarter. He is engaged in a ticklish discussion with the Court of France, in relation to the affairs of Holland."

This I acknowledged, and in the precise language of your lordship's dispatch, I represented, *fully and fairly*, the state of that business, assuring his Imperial Majesty that I was ordered to make to him every communication upon that subject which he should think proper to require; as my Court was fully persuaded that the independence of that Republic and the maintenance of its *ancient* constitution, were matters of very essential importance to the House of Austria.

The Emperor (without departing a single instant from that good-humoured affability which had reigned in his conversation) replied, in a tone bordering on jocular *irony*, "Independence! yes! and *old* constitution, if you please, too. But whatever concern foreign powers may have in keeping the Dutch Republic from falling to pieces, it can be of little, very little importance, indeed, to any other crowned heads save those who are related by blood or affinity to the Prince of

Orange, whether there is, or is not, a Stadtholder in Holland; or, granting a magistrate of that denomination shall exist, whether his powers are enlarged or curtailed."

I replied, that to me it appeared perfectly clear that the maintenance, not only of the forms, but the principles of the *ancient* constitution of Holland was, in a very high degree, interesting to his Imperial Majesty; as that very faction which now governs the province of Holland, and from the most wicked motives oppresses the Prince of Orange and overturns every fundamental law, has eagerly sought to spread the same infectious spirit of licentious democracy and wild innovation among their neighbours the Flemings, whom they would have assisted with all their might, in their resistance to his government, if these lawless demagogues had remained masters *at home*. I ended by saying, that his Imperial Majesty's ancestors had experienced the value of that friendship which the Republic, under a well ordered government, could lend; and that (in my humble opinion) the actual situation of things rendered that consideration to the *full* as weighty now as at any former period. The Emperor, after attentively listening, resumed to this effect:—

"I will readily grant you, Sir, that the *patriots*, as they are pleased to call themselves, in Holland, have been extremely desirous to make proselytes to their doctrines every where. But it is not from them alone that my subjects in the Netherlands have borrowed the spirit of turbulent and mistaken patriotism. It is flaming forth in every petty state of that quarter of Europe. Not only at Liège, at Spa, and at Aix-la-Chapelle, but even in the Princess Cunegunda of Saxony's Abbey of Essen! Nay, let me tell you," continued the Emperor, "but only in the way of confidential conversation, that the King of France has

acted very *unwisely*, not to use a *harsher* term, to have sown the seeds of that fructifying doctrine in his own dominions; by his late *assembly of the Notables*—he may expect the *inevitable growth of them throughout the whole of his future reign.*

"I have different notions about all that," pursued the monarch, "and I am determined to act in consequence of them. Yet I can lay my hand upon my heart and affirm, that I have not the smallest wish to infringe the just liberties of any set of men in any part of my dominions. As to the value of Dutch friendship or enmity, I will only say, that the ideas you allude to are founded upon principles of other times, and which are now wholly altered. Who amongst our predecessors would have foretold, or even believed, if another had predicted it, that Austria and France would at this time be in *alliance?* Yet you see that it is true, and that Holland is the ally of France, and has lately proved it by waging bitter war against England?"

I replied, that our ancestors had lost nothing in my estimation from not having foreseen events so *highly improbable* on every account. Before I could well make the remark, his Majesty gave another turn to the conversation by saying *abruptly*, "There is a new piece of intelligence respecting the Dutch affairs. We have learned that the King of Prussia is marching an army towards that country, and *report says*, in concert with the King of England, who is to take Hessians into his pay, and lend his Prussian Majesty his Hanoverian troops."

I answered, that though the second part of this intelligence was, to the best of my knowledge, without foundation, the former part of it was certainly true. That the march of a corps of Prussian troops seemed to me a very natural and justifiable measure, in order to obtain satisfaction for an egregious insult offered to

that monarch's sister; an affair which I held to be wholly separate from the other disputes in the republic, which France, England, and Prussia, all appeared desirous to terminate by joint mediation.

"Insult! insult!" resumed the monarch, "that is an excellent word, and serves the purpose admirably when a pretext is wanted for sending troops into Holland. That the Dutch Burgomasters are *uncourtly* towards ladies, must be acknowledged; but between you and I, Sir, the real state of the case appears to me to be *this*: The States of Holland are unquestionably masters in their own country. They alone have the right to judge whether the wife of the Prince of Orange (a prince in their service, and now at open war with them) may make a visit to the Hague without any danger to their government. If they thought she could not, I am at a loss to conceive who can justly find a crime in their desiring to be excused receiving it. The manner may have been *improper*, the act is itself justifiable." *

* Among the inconsistencies of Joseph, few are more striking than this vindication, by a monarch bent on quelling by force insurrectionary movements in his own adjoining dominions, of an act of gross outrage, on the part of the Dutch leaders towards the wife of a Prince, whom this *democratic despot* is pleased to style their "Magistrate." The Prince of Orange having been obliged to return to Nimeguen, the Princess, whether from a confidence in her abilities (which were universally acknowledged), or in the influence which might be derived from her sex and dignity, adopted the resolution of proceeding down from Nimeguen to the Hague, with the view of entering into personal negotiation with the adverse party. But the spectacle of a princess, allied to one of the greatest royal houses, after being reduced to fly from her country, nobly rushing back and committing herself to the mercy of hostile factions, to plead the cause of her husband and children, was not to be rashly risked among a people, a great portion of whom were still attached to the House of Orange. The Princess, accompanied only by one lady, Count Bertrand, and an officer or two, was rudely arrested by a burgher guard who exhibited the exultation and disorder of a banditti who had seized a rich prey; and by their noise so startled the horses in the Princess's carriage, that she narrowly escaped being overturned into one of the canals. She

I begged the Emperor's pardon for owning that I saw that matter in a very different light. Upon which he said, "It is indeed superfluous to dwell upon this point which is *foreign to me*.* Let us then," proceeded he, "return to the affairs of the Netherlands, in order that I may give you some idea of what I *expect* from thence, and of the plan of conduct I have laid down to myself."

In pursuance of this very gracious intention, his Imperial Majesty entered into a very long detail of circumstances, which I must abridge, in order not to swell this letter to an enormous bulk. He said it was a clear maxim with him that there could be no *separate*, still less any *repugnant* interests between sovereign and subject. That he had never entertained the most distant idea of enslaving the Flemings. Had such a purpose existed, he would have taken the opportunity when, at the end of the Dutch quarrel, he had sixty thousand soldiers in that country. That his journey to the Crimea at the moment when the new arrangements and reformation of the Courts of Justice were to be introduced, afforded a positive proof that he had no oppressive views. That he expected the deputies would soon arrive at Vienna, but without full power to *conclude* anything. "Perhaps," said he, "they will bring along with them a pretty large share of grievances, and a still larger one of *obstinacy*." That, nevertheless, as he had nothing to disguise, and had never yet found

and her *suite* were then dragged about as prisoners till about seven in the evening; when on arriving at a small inn, the captain of the free corps accompanied the Princess into her room, with his sword drawn in his hand, and sitting cross-legged by her side, ordered wine, beer, pipes, and tobacco!

* Little did even Joseph's lately uttered prognostics on French affairs enable him to foresee, that within three short years a *sister of his own* would be exposed to similar insult and detention, not in an attempt to re-enter, but to escape from a kingdom where her life was in danger!

plain sense, and honest purpose *unpersuasive*, he thought he should persuade the deputies of two things: First, the constitution of their different provinces had been (notwithstanding its boasted excellence) extremely faulty in its first principles, and palpably inadequate to establish and enforce salutary laws for the general good, strict order and responsibility in matters of finance, and an impartial, as well as prompt distribution of justice in the different courts of law. Secondly, that the States had proved themselves neither *prudent* nor in fact *upright* guardians of the public purse; seeing that the Board of Treasury (chosen by themselves) had never, in the course of forty-four years, balanced or settled a *single accompt*, or known with certainty the truth of their own pecuniary situation. That upwards of five hundred petitions or remonstrances (of which he would produce a list) given into his *own hands* during his journey through the Low Countries, would *demonstrate* that their system of jurisdiction had been tardy, partial, and inefficacious; and that in reforming the law courts he had rendered the Flemings an essential service. That if he could be capable of wishing to make her subjects in those provinces *smart* for their present errors, he could do it, by leaving them in the hands of their blood-sucking lawyers, the real *pests* of their country. That he was determined, when he met the deputies, to debate every point with them coolly, but was equally resolved to be bullied into none; as he sincerely respected every real and essential article of their constitution. That this point once agreed on, sovereign and subject ought (and he hoped would) go *hand in hand* in regenerating good order and respect for law in every department and corner of the country.

"With these principles and views," continued he, "I am persuaded I ought to succeed; and the more so as both I and my subjects are by this time equally convinced

that their means of resistance are much inferior to their former boastings. First of all, they thought it morally impossible that from their local situation, and other imaginary advantages, I should ever attempt to reduce them *by force*. Secondly, if I undertook to do so, they were to raise and pay a *powerful* army; to send it to the Rhine, and to defend the passage of that river against my troops. Thirdly, as that project grew stale, and appeared to themselves impracticable, they were at last resolved to fortify every pass, every rivulet, and every cottage, and to fight for their country *step by step*. I leave you to judge, Sir, of the practicability of either of these schemes. My language in regard to their possible resistance has been *this*: 'You say, gentlemen, that I am to lose the Netherlands for *ever*; I tell you in return, that my monarchy is *indivisible*, and that I will risk the whole of it to preserve it entire. I should be truly sorry to order a single musket to be fired against any subject of my own. But before you dispose of my provinces so lightly, pray recollect what force you have to cope with; and be assured that that force shall be fully and strenuously exerted to bring you to your senses. You threaten me with emigrations; I shall be sorry for them; but valuable subjects and industrious men do not emigrate,* and your soil and your situation are in every respect too good and comfortable for you to abandon them lightly. The monied men,' say you, 'will quit the country: no such thing; monied men know their own interests, and I will make it clearly their's to remain where they are. You perhaps think you may indulge a little spirit of anarchy, and even try the weapons of *rebellion* without the dread of any fatal consequences; and that you can throw them aside when you are tired

* The well-read Joseph had surely forgotten the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the ancestors of those very Flemings transporting themselves to England.

of them. In relation to this last point, I make to you, gentlemen, this explicit declaration. My subjects shall never have just cause to suspect me of being ambitious to grasp at inordinate power. They shall never be driven to extreme and violent measures by any voluntary act of mine. But that they may know what they have to expect in all *possible* cases, it is fit that you, gentlemen, should previously understand my notions in regard to every species of conquest.

" 'Should the chance of war render me master of a province wrested from an enemy, and relinquished to me without any conditional stipulations, I should think it my duty to respect private property, and the general laws and customs, when they did not manifestly clash with my system of government. But if any province of my monarchy should (which Heaven avert,) ever wield against me the sword of rebellion, and that I should succeed in re-conquering it by the same weapon, I publicly declare that I should look upon the entire property of every individual, of every rank and condition, who had taken up arms against my government, as irretrievably forfeited to the Crown; and the whole laws, privileges, and institutions of that country, wholly and solely at my disposition and mercy.'

"The last argument," pursued the monarch, "appears to have been one of the most pertinent and cogent that could be employed; and I have no doubt of its efficacy."

Having said this, his Imperial Majesty again pressed my arm, and after repeating the assurance that the commission I had executed by his Majesty's order, had given him real pleasure—he put an end to the conversation. I withdrew, after thanking the Emperor for his condescension, and begging him to remain persuaded that the happiness and prosperity of his reign are nowhere more ardently wished for than in England.

The above conversation requires no comment. I

have omitted *much* to avoid prolixity; but I have certainly *mis-stated* nothing. The different expressions of my concurrence with, or dissent from, the monarch's opinions, which I introduced from time to time, are the less deserving of your lordship's notice, as they produced *no effect*. The Emperor's language was that of an *ally of France*, partial towards *her*, and viewing the Dutch affairs through a deceitful medium, strongly tinged with *her* false colouring. I beg permission, however, to make one observation before I conclude this long letter; that, however predominant his bias in favour of France may be, or whatever proofs his future conduct may furnish of her ascendancy over his councils, no one expression in the above conversation indicated (according to my judgment) his being absolutely *bound* by any engagement to act in concert with that power, in respect to the affairs of Holland. His mind may be prepared to adopt *false principles*, and pursue *impolitic measures*, but I am persuaded that his *hands* are *hitherto* at *liberty*.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, January 30th, 1788.

MY LORD,

It is matter of deep concern to me, to be reduced to the necessity of desiring your lordship to lay before his Majesty the following humble, yet most earnest request, which my actual situation renders not only reasonable, but strictly indispensable.

On the 4th of August, I sent to your lordship by the messenger Roworth, and on the 30th of the same month by the messenger Basilico, several letters, which were so far important, as they proved that the sentiments of this Court were far from being consonant to the King's wishes,

and that the Porte had already declared war against Russia, in which war Austria must soon be involved.

In a dispatch of the 4th September, your lordship (after mentioning the receipt of those letters merely by the numbers marked on them), was pleased to signify to me his Majesty's high approbation of the language I voluntarily held in order to refute the calumnies of France at Constantinople, and gave me orders to repeat the same expressions in his Majesty's name. To these your lordship added the assurance, that the rupture with Turkey could make no change in the King's friendly sentiments towards his Imperial Majesty.

But it appeared, soon after, that the Emperor had very different views, and that he himself had been the proposer, at Petersburgh, of a triple alliance including France, in direct opposition to the interests of Great Britain, and which (if brought to a conclusion) must necessarily endanger the tranquillity of Europe.

Yet, from the date of the 14th September, to this hour, I have not been honoured with a single line of information or instruction relative to that very important matter, or to any object particularly relating to the affairs of Austria. Your subsequent dispatches, Nos. 10 and 11, relate solely to the Dutch affairs, and to the accommodation of our differences with France; No. 12 enclosed me the King's speech, and No. 13 only demanded information from me respecting the coinage of Austria.

This is the fifty-third letter I have written to the office, since I have received one word in direct answer to any of them.

A silence so long, and unprecedented, can only prove that the variable, and even the inimical politics of this Court, have justly become matter of so much indifference to Great Britain, that they neither call for animadversion, nor for solicitous investigation.

I likewise draw from the duration of your lordship's silence this equitable conclusion, that the King has at present no business to transact at Vienna, and that, consequently, my presence there is in no shape necessary for his service.

On the other hand, my lord, it will not surprise you to learn, that after residing constantly, and with the most intense application to my duty, for twelve long years within the walls of Vienna, during which time I have presented to the sovereign, and exerted my best offices and hospitality towards above five hundred of our countrymen, my pecuniary circumstances, and my private affairs, stand greatly in need of my presence in Great Britain.

This exigency is considerably augmented by your lordship's not having favoured me with any sort of answer to a very candid, as well as respectful exposition of my circumstances and claims which came to your hands upwards of three months ago.

It, therefore, only remains for me to beg of your lordship, in your official capacity, to submit this letter without delay to his Majesty's benevolent consideration. I entertain the most sanguine hope that he will be graciously pleased to grant me a leave of absence for six months, and the permission to return to England, in the month of March or April. Mr. Stratton, who has served with zeal and capacity here as secretary for seven years, may (if your lordship thinks proper) be charged with the King's affairs, till my *return* to Vienna, and it will be of advantage to them that he should be honoured with the commission of his Majesty's Secretary of Legation.

I appeal to your lordship's justice for the fairness of what I have above stated, and I trust that the innate goodness, and long experienced favour of my sovereign, will once more be manifested towards his old faithful

servant, by the speedy and complete gratification of those wishes, which my public and private duties have impelled me thus ardently to express.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

The above public letter to the Marquis of Caermarthen was enclosed in a private letter to him of the following tenor:—

MY LORD,

At the same time that I give way to the irresistible motives which oblige me to request your lordship to lay before the King the enclosed letter *in extenso*, I am by no means unmindful of the deference which is due to my principal; and therefore have put my letter under a separate cover, that your lordship may order it to be decyphered by a confidential person.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, Feb. 27th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I had the honour to receive on Monday last your dispatch No. 1. I thank your lordship for having taken the earliest opportunity of laying before his Majesty my letter No. 13. That letter would never have had a place in the official correspondence, nor even have had an existence in thought, if, during five long months (and five months of a new war, in which three empires are actually engaged) I could have obtained, from my Secretary of State, one line of instructions regarding public affairs, or in answer to my respectful application touching my own most interesting private concerns.

I wait with the reverence of grateful and affectionate duty, and with a confidence, founded on conscious rectitude, the decision of my gracious sovereign, and of his confidential servants, with respect to every part of my conduct.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

The tone of the above letter—so indicative of the frank and confiding character of its writer, will prove how little his previous remonstrances were dictated by pique or personal resentment; a fact further corroborated by the enhanced minuteness of his official communications during the anxious period which immediately followed. That they failed in producing their legitimate effect, will appear from the following extract:—

[*Secret and Confidential.*]

Vienna, March 15th, 1788.

BY a courier who arrived here last night, from the Emperor, he sent back to Prince Kaunitz the last dispatches from Count Mercy. But it is believed that his Imperial Majesty dispatched, at the same time, a messenger to Petersburgh with his private letters to the Empress of Russia. My best endeavours to discover the purport of these important dispatches from Paris, have hitherto proved unsuccessful. But I hope in a day or two, to come at the knowledge of their general scope, and to learn whether France will openly thwart, privately counteract, or openly acquiesce in the establishment of that joint mediation which Prussia has held out at Petersburgh.

Your lordship will long ere now, have seen the unquestionable expediency of acquainting me with the real state of that important negotiation in which the King, our master, bears so large a share, and which, if

it should ever meet with the acceptance of Russia, must be equally extended to the Court where I reside.

It is morally impossible, (I do your lordship the justice to believe it) that his Majesty's minister at Vienna, should ever find himself in the shameful situation of learning, from the steps which may hereafter be taken by the ministers of Prussia, the determination of the *English Cabinet*, in relation to points of the highest importance to Austria, and which must necessarily have the greatest influence on our general system of politics.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. KEITH.

The conciliatory and unselfish spirit in which some flattering assurances from head quarters (where we learn from private letters that his merits were, spite of unpardonable negligence, adequately appreciated) were met and acknowledged, is characteristic of the writer of the dispatch which follows:—

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, March 29th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I am truly grateful for the kind expressions which your lordship has employed in your dispatch No. 3; and I place the firmest reliance on the promise it contains, that his Majesty's confidential servants will even have the goodness to attend to my private concerns in the most friendly manner.

From the moment that Austria drew the sword against the Porte, I felt the palpable inexpediency of my obtaining (or even desiring to obtain) a leave of absence from my post. My private interests or wishes never have, nor ever shall come in the smallest degree of competition with my public duty; and my sole object henceforth

shall be to render the keen and constant exertion of every faculty I possess as advantageous as possible to the King's service. It was with this view only that I have so frequently requested of your lordship that sort of authentic information which can alone give a public and useful direction to my researches into the mysterious schemes of this Court. The sketch your lordship has drawn in your last dispatch of the Emperor's policy in regard to France is perfectly just, and that exposition, together with the light you have had the goodness to afford me into the King's invariable desire and purpose to re-establish, if possible, the ancient and solid system of Europe, will serve to regulate every step of my conduct here. But, my lord, it cannot escape your penetration, that one-half of the secrets of the Austrian cabinet must necessarily have their existence at Petersburgh, and that very frequently the main spring of the Emperor's most important actions has its origin there. Consequently, the political conduct of Russia toward France, Prussia, and Great Britain, and more particularly the effects that conduct produces at St. James's, should, in my humble opinion, be explained from time to time to his Majesty's minister at Vienna, in order to furnish him the best and surest way to those Austrian secrets which are otherwise impenetrable.

I shall only add, that my feeble talents, to their utmost extent, are constantly at the disposal of my superiors; but that to render them of essential value or advantage, they must bear from your lordship's office the solid stamp and sanction of ministerial guidance, assistance, and support.

R. M. K.

[No. 46.]

Vienna, April 30th, 1788.

My Lord,

M. Jacobi (for many years resident from Prussia at this Court) returned from Berlin on Monday, with very honourable marks of his sovereign's favour. He is raised to the rank of Baron, and will very soon present his credentials here as Electoral Envoy from Brandenbourg to the Imperial Court.

He brought me a confidential letter from Mr. Ewart, who informs me that he is already far advanced in framing new and very intimate engagements between our Court and that of Berlin. M. Jacobi has himself spoken still more affirmatively, by assuring me that a treaty of defensive alliance is on the point of being concluded between Great Britain and Prussia; the King his master having very recently removed the only obstacle which stood in the way, by agreeing that a war in the East Indies, in which any European power shall take part against England, is to be looked upon as a *casus fœderis*.

I own, my lord, that it is matter of infinite mortification to me to hear from a foreign minister what is the real system of politics which the Court I serve is preparing to embrace; and my surprise is the greater as your lordship's dispatch, No. 3, (which came to my hands only four weeks ago) gave me every reason to believe that the King's views and wishes were directed to a very different object.

Whilst I give vent to these painful feelings, I at the same time declare it to be my sincere opinion that after Great Britain has had so many proofs of the unfriendly disposition of Austria, and of the blind ingratitude of Russia towards her, an alliance with Prussia has every motive of sound policy, and every principle of wisdom, foresight, and self-defence to recommend it.

A complete change of system, in regard to German

politics, has therefore become not only expedient, but indispensably necessary. But that it should have taken place in the King's councils without my Secretary of State's having ever given me the most distant intimation of such a decision, is what I cannot comprehend. I am bold to say (and I should not deserve the honour of serving the King as his minister at the first Court of Germany, if I refrained from saying it *loudly*) that such concealment is disgraceful to me in the position in which the King has placed me, and likewise highly prejudicial to his service. I must add, my lord, that I feel it to be so little consonant to the regard which I have an unquestionable right to expect from my official superior, that unless it be immediately repaired by confidential information and instructions, I shall (if they are denied to me) think I owe it to my personal character to make it my humble request to his Majesty to retire from a profession for which (under such treatment as I have lately experienced) I have the honest pride to declare myself totally unfit.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

[No. 55.]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CARMARTHEN.

Vienna, May 30th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I received by the messenger, Major, on Monday last, your lordship's dispatch, inclosing the *original* of my No. 46 to the office, and putting it into my power to withdraw that letter, or to resign my commission as his Majesty's minister at the Court of Vienna.

I trust that every circumstance of my past life, and every step of my public conduct will have fixed in the mind of my gracious sovereign the certain conviction

that I am incapable of retracting a single word of what was written in the fulness of a heart whose feelings, and the exertions which they produced, have more than once been honoured with his Majesty's applause and approbation. My whole mind, with all its faculties, gave then, and gives at this moment, a cool and deliberate sanction to the expressions I employed in that letter; and it therefore only remains for me to thank your lordship for having (undoubtedly from candid and friendly motives) put it in my power to reconsider that letter, to confirm its contents, and by sending it back to the office, to renew my request that it may *remain in the official correspondence;* but in my *own precise words,* and not in those which a careless decypherer in the office has thought proper to *substitute in their room.* I have underlined with red ink all the cyphers in question, and the interpolations of which I so justly complain. I most cheerfully refer to your lordship's candour in judging, whether or not, in a moment when expressions were to be *weighed,* I might not have expected that the official subalterns would give to mine their true sense and value.

That no misconstruction may remain on record, I send inclosed a copy taken *verbatim* by my secretary, Mr. Stratton, from my letter-book, written in *my own hand.* That gentleman likewise certifies the minute correctness of his copy.

That the avowal of the sentiments and principles contained in that letter should, in any shape, expose me to incur the displeasure of government, is so far from entering into my comprehension, that I am in the sincere persuasion that the perusal of the following detail of the motives of my conduct will strengthen all my claims to the esteem of my sovereign, and to that of his confidential servants.

After serving his Majesty in Saxony, Denmark, and

Vienna, for almost twenty years, and being honoured with the uninterrupted confidence and approbation of *ten* Secretaries of State, it was matter of equal surprise and concern to me, from the date of your lordship's of the 14th September, 1787, (which signified to me the King's high approbation of my ministerial conduct here) that my mission, and my personal concerns had all at once been judged, by your lordship, to be wholly undeserving of attention or regard. This became evident as not a line of answer was given to fifty successive public dispatches, nor to my earnest yet respectful representation of the situation of my private affairs, and of the well-founded claims of my secretary, Mr. Stratton, to a share in those favours, which his juniors in employment had, very deservedly, obtained from government.

Your lordship's answer to my fifty-third letter gave me to understand that my leave of absence would probably be granted, as my presence at Vienna was not necessary to his Majesty's service. In my answer to that official letter I thanked your lordship for having taken an early opportunity of laying before his Majesty my ingenuous remonstrance respecting the treatment I had experienced as a minister and as a man, and I expressed the most implicit reliance on the King's goodness and justice in forming a decisive opinion concerning every part of my conduct.

Soon after that period the Emperor's declaration of war against the Turks, rendered the scene at Vienna, extremely interesting. Yet, from the date of your lordship's dispatch above mentioned, I have received but one answer (relative to the business of my mission) to about forty of mine. I send annexed a copy of that answer, that it may be seen with what care *I myself* decyphered it, and that along with the promise of the most friendly attention to my personal concerns, it

brought me, in the phrases which sum up, and conclude its purport, the following strong assurance in express words.

"No intelligence from Vienna could give his Majesty so much satisfaction, as to be convinced of the real friendship towards England existing in the Austrian councils; and a desire to return to that ancient system of harmony and good correspondence between the two powers, which would render them both secure in their present possessions, and inspire other powers with that degree of respect for them, which would make them the protectors of the general rights of Europe, and at once render the public tranquillity not only complete, but permanent."

With such an authority, and of so fresh a date, from my Secretary of State, I had an unquestionable right to conclude that my sovereign remained firm in the wish to seize the first opportunity of renewing that connection with the House of Austria, that had proved of so great advantage to Great Britain, and to this country.

Nevertheless, my lord, it did not escape me that a total change of system might become not only expedient, but necessary. I therefore said, in my enclosed letter, (and I repeat it,) that after so many proofs of the unfriendly disposition of Austria, and of the blind ingratitude of Russia towards England, an alliance with Prussia might have *every motive of sound policy, and every principle of wisdom, foresight, and self-defence to recommend it!*

But, my lord, I felt that I had no right whatever to forestal events, nor to deviate *in the least* from the spirit of the last orders sent to me. I remained in the firm conviction that *if ever* the King in his wisdom should see just grounds for departing from those political principles which he had invariably professed, and had (through his Secretaries of State, during my sixteen

years' mission,) enjoined me to look upon as the strict rules of my conduct; his minister for foreign affairs could not fail to make an immediate change in my instructions, by a *few confidential lines*, and without giving me a larger share in the secrets of my royal master, than the good of his service absolutely demanded. Nothing more could have been required than such an act of common justice, and of state policy, to save me from the possible danger of *committing the King's name* by any ill-timed efforts of my zeal in prosecuting an object, which (though repeatedly recommended to me) could, even if attainable, be no longer embraced.

In this precise situation, and wholly in the dark with respect to the new politics of Great Britain, did I find myself, when I learned from undoubted authority that the Prussian ministry boasted of their being on the point of forming an alliance with England. Of this I acquainted your lordship, adding that I gave no sort of credit to an article of intelligence which *ran counter* to the very late instructions I had received from your lordship.

I have already said to what a pitch my astonishment and concern were raised in learning, on the 29th of April, not only from Mr. Ewart, that he was far advanced in framing new and very intimate engagements with Prussia; but from the mouth of M. Jacobi, the confidential minister of Brandenbourg, that a treaty of defensive alliance between England and his Court, was on the point of *being* concluded.

Amidst these feelings I did not hesitate a moment to write that letter which, in my opinion, stands in need of no other defence than this single consideration.

Every lawful wish respecting public business that a Secretary of State clearly expresses to his inferior, points out a precise object which that inferior is bound to pursue and forward with his best ability. Every such wish

is in fact an order, and to obey it an indispensable duty. I am, to this hour, under explicit and reiterated orders to strive, as far as prudence, and a just respect for the dignity of my sovereign can allow, to rekindle in the mind of his Imperial Majesty, and of his ministers, the hearty wish of renewing a friendly connection and good understanding with Great Britain, and I am *empowered*, by your latest instructions, to assure them *in return*, that the King has that connection sincerely at heart.

But I beg it may be observed, that if through a sudden change of dispositions here, (which the national calamities of France, the growing difficulties of the Turkish war, and the suspicious tergiversations of Russia might very possibly have created) I had been able to succeed, and to have brought Austria to that very point at which professions of the King's friendship, and readiness to renew engagements with his Court, would have been well placed and warmly received, my sovereign and his ministry must, in that case, have been under the unavoidable necessity of *disowning me* and *my language*, though held *by authority*; as it is clear that England, whilst treating with Prussia, cannot connect herself with Austria.

Of all situations, my lord, that of a foreign minister wholly deprived of the confidence of his Court, and who is allowed, nay, even encouraged to proceed in a political pursuit which, in its complete success, could only lead him to disgrace and disavowal on the part of his master, is the meanest and most shameful. He alone, who silently submits to such treatment deserves the continuance of it; and I am certain that your lordship did not suspect me of tamely stooping to act so pitiful a part.

Here I rest my justification. My conscience tells me that I have fulfilled my duty to my king, to my country, to your lordship, and to myself. If, after these reasons have been weighed in the Cabinet, it shall still be expected that I should resign, I humbly lay at his Majesty's

feet my resignation of that mission which he was graciously pleased to confer on me sixteen years ago, unasked, and under the very honourable denomination of the reward of past services.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

Four months—of considerable suspense no doubt to the writer of the above—elapsed before he again heard from the principal thus addressed. The following letter will show that, in the prospect of a journey to England, which many circumstances rendered so desirable to himself, he could express with equal firmness his sense of the claims of another.

[*By Mr. Stratton.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, July 27th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I received yesterday your lordship's dispatch containing his Majesty's commands for my return to England as soon as I *conveniently* can, and authorising me to present Mr. Stratton to Prince Kaunitz in the capacity of his Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires*, at this Court. But your lordship will permit me to explain, by Mr. Stratton (who goes to England on purpose), two circumstances which require a clear elucidation before it can be in his power or mine, to pay that full obedience to the King's commands, which we have each of us most sincerely at heart, to evince on every occasion.

I should do an injury to your lordship if I admitted a supposition that this order for my return home could be looked upon as a preliminary step to my final recal from a Court where I have resided sixteen years with a very large establishment, without a suitable opportunity of disposing of my valuable effects before I quitted

Vienna. I presume that if such had been the intention of government, your lordship would have embraced the open and manly way of announcing my recal, and of sending me those official letters for the Emperor, which would have enabled me to put a becoming end to a mission which, I venture to affirm, has done credit to the Court I serve, and to the nation. Neither of these steps having been taken, I am forced to look for another motive for my being called home at present. Yet it is impossible for me to ascribe it to the existence of an idea that I can be induced to reconsider, or to recede from, those points of opinion and principle, upon which I have lately explained myself fully and irrevocably.

But, my lord, there stands in the way of a more prompt obedience to his Majesty's commands, another, and an insuperable obstacle, arising from Mr. Stratton's situation, and from his becoming principles. That gentleman has served me almost eight years, with great assiduity, and distinguished zeal and talents. He had acquired a claim to the attention of government, and a share of the public rewards attached to his profession, some years before either of the gentlemen who are his Majesty's Secretaries of Legation had dipped their pens in diplomatic ink. He thinks he has been hardly dealt with in seeing these gentlemen (however well entitled both he and I consider them to the King's favour) put over his head. He therefore judges it to be derogatory to his honour, and prejudicial to his reputation, to accept the office of *Chargé d'Affaires*, unless, as has been practised in the two last instances, at Berlin and Petersburgh, he be likewise honoured with the title of his Majesty's Secretary of Legation. He will explain his sentiments to your lordship, and will set out on his return to Vienna, the moment you are pleased to expedite him.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

Representations so honourable to the good feeling of the writer, and so irrefragable in themselves as to be attended ultimately with the success they deserved, having proved ineffectual; the lapse of two months called forth the following characteristic letter:—

Vienna, September 27th, 1788.

My Lord,

I am sorry that the arrival of two mails from England, without a line from the office, lays me under the necessity of reminding your lordship that you have signified to me the King's commands for my immediate return to England; and yet leave me in the impossibility of obeying them, without betraying my public duty toward my sovereign and my country.

To leave the Court of Vienna without any person to transact the King's business (especially in a conjuncture so truly critical as the present) would infallibly be interpreted here as a suspension of all correspondence between the two Courts; and the consequences are self-evident.

Your lordship has called me home, and at the same time effectually shut the door against Mr. Stratton's entrance into his Majesty's service. I gave your lordship notice in my letter of 28th July, that he would not submit to dishonour; and he himself left the same declaration in your lordship's hands, *in writing*.

If I had a grain of malice in my disposition, I would set out for England to-morrow, and leave it to my official superior to get out of the dilemma the best way he could. But, my lord, I have it sincerely at heart to prove that I am a faithful servant of the Crown,* as well as a good-humoured man.

* That this was no mere assertion, the best proof is to be found in the detailed and luminous official communications which Sir Robert, (spite

I therefore only put your lordship in mind of the situation in which you have placed me; and beg that by laying this letter *immediately before his Majesty*, you may exculpate me from all blame, if his personal commands are not obeyed with that promptitude which I have ever shown in fulfilling them.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

Though it was not perhaps in human nature that after so sharp a correspondence, some irritation (heightened, perhaps, in a naturally amiable mind, by a lurking sense of being in the wrong) should not prevail at head quarters; yet a less offensive mode of testifying it might perhaps have been selected, than that complained of in the ensuing letter. It was worth while, however, to have experienced the affront, to be enabled thus first to *feel*, and then thus to requite it.

Vienna, October 18th.

My Lord,

Although your lordship has not thought proper to give me any official notice relative to the person who is to take charge of his Majesty's affairs during my absence from this Court, it has, however, come to my knowledge (through Prince Kaunitz and Baron Jacobi), that your choice has fallen on a Mr. Hammond, who is coming hither for the purpose.

This mode of communication between a British Secretary of State and the King's servants at foreign Courts is *quite new*, and I wish your lordship joy on the invention.

As it is of consequence to me to *discover* when his Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires* may be expected here, I

of every discouragement), continued to forward, during the course of this unpleasant altercation, to his principal.

shall go to the Austrian minister this evening, to seek from him that information which you have unaccountably denied me; though, to my certain knowledge, two mails have been dispatched from Whitehall, since you communicated to the Austrian minister in London the appointment of Mr. Hammond.

As I take it for granted that this gentleman is already on the road, I shall defer my departure till I have had it in my power to give Mr. Hammond a kind reception; and by affording him every information and assistance, to convince him that I have nothing more sincerely at heart than to enable him to transact the King's business (till my return hither) with advantage to his Majesty's service, and honour to himself.

I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

R. M. K.

The extent of this noble return of the most frank and generous courtesy, to a persevering course of petty concealment and unprovoked rudeness, will be gathered from the concluding letter of a correspondence, as foreign to the character, as it was repugnant to the habits of Sir R. Murray Keith.

Vienna, Oct. 22d, 1788.

My Lord,

Mr. Hammond delivered to me, on Sunday last, your lordship's dispatch, and expressed to me his regret that a slight indisposition on the road, has prevented his travelling more expeditiously.

It is with pleasure, I assure your lordship, that all I have seen of that gentleman, during the few days we have passed together, corresponds perfectly with the good opinion you entertain of him; and that his modest, ingenuous manners, joined to an intelligent and well cultivated understanding, give him a just title to general esteem, and to my personal regard.

He will tell your lordship that I have not only given him the kindest reception, but that I apply myself assiduously to furnish him with every information, instruction, and assistance which can contribute to his success and honour in the commission which he is soon to fill. Every paper in my possession is at his disposal; he extracts or copies what he thinks proper; and I hope that in a few days he will have gained so just an idea of the general state of affairs here, and of the characters of the principal persons, that he will be able to walk alone in his professional career, without any danger of stumbling. I shall leave in his hands all the cyphers. I need not observe to your lordship, that in the situation in which I find myself, my correspondence with the office has become an indispensable companion of my visit to England.

On Monday I presented Mr. Hammond to Prince Kaunitz, and recommended him strongly to the favourable regard of that minister. I have paid all the usual visits with him, and have made him acquainted with the *corps diplomatique;* giving him useful lights respecting the characters of those members of it, with whom he is to live in intimacy, and from whom he may extract authentic information. My departure shall not be delayed one moment beyond what may be necessary to render Mr. Hammond's entrance on the duties of his commission as advantageous as possible.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

Sir. R. Murray Keith, who set out from Vienna as soon as the above benevolent purpose was accomplished,*

* That it was "accomplished," as regarded winning the confidence and even affection of his youthful deputy, is pleasingly manifested in his *first* letter (still extant, and beginning "*dear Sir Robert*"), in which he says, that on his presentation to the Emperor, he had concluded many inquiries as to Sir R. K—'s journey, by asking on what day he arrived

arrived in London on the 17th November. It would appear that on the very next day, he sought and obtained a personal interview with his principal, the result of which it would be anticipating here to mention further, than that on the part of the superior, the withdrawal of the letter No. 46, was still made a *sine quâ non* of the resumption of office at Vienna; while on that of Sir Robert that step was still indignantly rejected, and the whole matter referred unreservedly to the King's decision after a personal audience.

This, the well-known circumstance of his Majesty's illness, for some time utterly precluded; nor was it till after four months of no doubt abundantly harassing suspense (when too, official discretion rendered all participation in his anxieties impossible,) that on the King's complete recovery, no steps being taken by the Foreign Secretary to accelerate the audience on which hung suspended the public and private fortunes of his attached and faithful servant, Sir Robert Keith thus betook himself to the *fountain head.*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. PITT.

Cork Street, March 20*th*, 1789.

SIR,

It is with great satisfaction, and firm reliance on your candour, that I submit to your judgment every step of my public conduct; which I trust has always

and on being told the 17th (the very day Sir R— had himself fixed before leaving), said he was not at all surprised, as it corresponded with his usual punctuality. "The Emperor did not fail to add" (says his young correspondent), "that he should be extremely happy to see you back again at Vienna."

And when he did return again to Vienna, it may be pleasing to learn, that his first dispatch contained unqualified encomiums on Mr. Hammond, and a request to keep him (though a supernumerary), till something else offered.

appeared to be conformable to honourable principle and to warm and unshaken loyalty and attachment towards my sovereign.

After remaining here upwards of four months, without receiving any official communication from my principal, I have found myself under the necessity of writing to Lord Caermarthen, this day, the letter of which I take the liberty to enclose a copy.

I deferred troubling his lordship sooner with the renewal of my request, in the supposition that the pressure of official business, in the present crisis, might for some time prevent his attention from being turned to the private affairs of individuals. But a longer delay in my application might possibly be liable to misapprehension.

I have, therefore, endeavoured to unite in the language of it the decent and temperate assertion of my own just claims, together with the clearest proof of that deference, which I willingly show towards the character of my principal and the rights belonging to his official station.

I shall be extremely happy if this fair proceeding meets with your approbation; and completely so, if I have succeeded in proving to you, Sir, the heartfelt sentiments of respect and gratitude, with which I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Cork Street, March 20th, 1789.

MY LORD,

In our last conversation, of the 18th November, your lordship very frankly made known to me your determination to recall me from my mission to the Court of Vienna whenever you could obtain the royal sanction for that measure. This resolution you declared

to be *final*, it therefore excluded all further discussion, and debarred my attendance at your office.

The only request I made to your lordship was, that in consideration of my long services, and shattered fortune, I might be honoured, as soon as possible, with your commands upon the matter; that I might not be left unnecessarily under the heavy load of a very large establishment at Vienna.

Your lordship acquiesced in the justice of this request, and promised to fulfil it. From that day to this I have remained in strict and respectful silence, in regard to the whole affair, leaving the issue of it entirely in your lordship's hands.

Ever since the most happy event of his Majesty's complete recovery took place, I have lived in anxious expectation of those commands; wishing to seize the earliest opportunity of laying at the feet of my sovereign the sincere expressions of my zealous duty and deep gratitude, and entertaining the most sanguine hope to find, in the breast of my beneficent master, and invariable benefactor, such a favourable interpretation of my past services and present conduct, as will prove the most invaluable reward to which I can ever aspire.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

That *immediate steps* were about to be taken for procuring the audience in question (which, as Sir Robert in a letter not given, himself observes, could *only* according to etiquette, take place through Lord Caermarthen, as his *official* principal), the following note of apology from the under secretary proves:—

"*Whitehall, March 25th*, 1789.

"Mr. Fraser presents his compliments to Sir Robert Murray Keith, and has the honour to acquaint him that the event of the death of the late Duke of Leeds

(which happened early on Monday morning), has prevented the present Duke from receiving his Majesty's pleasure as to the time when the King may be pleased to receive Sir Robert."

As soon as filial duty and decency permitted a resumption of official business, no time seems to have been lost.

"*Whitehall, Wednesday, April 15th*, 1789.

"The Duke of Leeds presents his compliments to Sir Robert Murray Keith, and has the honour to inform him that the King will receive him at Windsor on Sunday next, at one o'clock."

"Sir Robert Keith presents his respectful compliments to the Duke of Leeds, together with his grateful acknowledgment for the honour his Grace has done him in the communication of his Majesty's command respecting his attendance at Windsor on Sunday next: they shall be obeyed with the utmost punctuality."

Of the particulars of the interview itself between the King and the faithful servant he had so long delighted to honour, no record (beyond the brief though satisfactory one contained in a letter shortly to be given, from Sir Robert to a diplomatic friend), has unfortunately been preserved. Its result, in addition to the triumph (never *once* made a subject of unseemly exultation, even in confidential correspondence), of confirmation in his post at Vienna, may be gathered from the following *studiously* polite and even friendly note (in his own hand) from the Duke, apologising for the postponement of a previously appointed meeting.

"*Whitehall, April 21st*, 1789.

"The Duke of Leeds presents his compliments to Sir Robert Keith, and is afraid it will be impossible for

him to receive Sir Robert to-morrow (as proposed) on account of Mr. Hastings' trial, which is then to be proceeded in. The Duke will let Sir Robert know whenever he can fix a time, and is generally at the office about two o'clock, if not engaged at the House of Lords; and shall be happy to see Sir Robert at that time, any day after Thursday that may be convenient for him to call at Whitehall. If the Duke can possibly fix a time, with certainty of his being punctual to it, he will not fail to send word to Sir Robert.

"*Sir Robert Murray Keith, &c., &c., &c.*"

What passed in the interview between Sir R. M. Keith and his late principal, has also not transpired. But the cordiality with which the official correspondence was resumed on his return to Vienna, and the share we shall see him frankly assigning to his lately offended superior in forwarding his legitimate claims,* prove that the temporary estrangement had vanished on the renewal of personal intercourse. Let us hope that in writing a few days after, by his Majesty's direction, to "desire Sir R. M. Keith to attend at Windsor to be sworn of the Privy Council," his *quondam* friend once more experienced the feelings which had prompted him, two or three years before, thus to express himself upon the subject:—"It gave me concern you should be at the trouble of stating your former services as a ground for the favour in question. The King is too well convinced of your long-experienced zeal and ability, to have made any

* The intimacy of the parties, previous to the alienation (on public more than private grounds) of the neglected diplomatist may be gathered from the playful terms in which Lord Caermarthen alludes to a former claim of the kind. "Observing by your letter to North, that you are anxious to know *Sir George's* (the King's) sentiments and intentions towards you, I am happy to tell you that they are precisely what you wish. Believe me, you do justice in reposing faith and confidence in his *Clerk*, who will not leave off worrying the *Steward*, till justice is done you."

recapitulation necessary; and I should be sorry indeed to have you suspect me (who was to convey your wishes to his Majesty) of being so totally ignorant of, or inattentive to your merit, as to think I could hesitate a moment in executing the commission. I immediately mentioned it to the King, and you may safely rely on your wish being gratified whenever your personal appearance can render it practicable. I do assure you with sincerity, I shall ever be happy in any opportunity which may enable me to oblige you."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. TREVOR.*

London, April 27th, 1769.

MY DEAR SIR,

At the moment that I received your most kind letter in last December, I felt the very essential obligation it conferred on me, and would have rejoiced in giving you the most immediate proof of my deep affection and gratitude for such a rare mark of disinterested friendship.

But (from considerations which I am sure would have met with your full approbation) I thought myself obliged not to depart, in any shape, from the strictest silence in regard to my personal and professional affairs, till I had obtained an audience of our beneficent sovereign.

I took, however, the earliest opportunity of conveying to you, my dear Sir, through Lady Hampden and Mrs. Trevor, my warmest thanks for those noble and delicate sentiments which did so much honour to your own goodness of heart, and made the most indelible impression on mine.

After remaining five months in a state of uncertainty

* Son to Lord Hampden, and his Majesty's minister at Turin.

relative to my future destination in the diplomatical line, I had the happiness to be most graciously received by his Majesty on Sunday last, in a private audience, and to learn that he had *determined to continue to employ my services at Vienna.* I had yesterday the honour of receiving from the Duke of Leeds's mouth, verbal directions to the same effect, and I lose not a moment in making you acquainted with this final decision. The Secretary of State has informed me, that his Majesty has been graciously pleased to confer on me the title of Privy Councillor, and that I shall be sworn in the first time the Council meets. This circumstance alone delays my departure for Scotland, where I am preparing to make a short excursion previous to my return to Vienna, which will probably take place in the end of next month.

I mention all this to you, my dear Sir, because you have convinced me that no man alive takes a more hearty interest in what regards me than you do.

I sincerely hope that talents and principles such as yours are known to be, will soon have an ample scope, in a wider and agreeable field; and I give you my sacred word that wherever that field shall be situated, it shall be my pride, as well as pleasure, to repay your brotherly cordiality, in full measure, with that unalterterable attachment which you have so good a right to expect from,

My dear Sir,
Your most obliged and faithful friend,
R. M. K.

P.S.—Since writing the above, advice has been received here of the very dangerous state of the Emperor's health on the 16th instant; and I have the King's commands to return immediately to Vienna. I shall set out early next week, and travel pretty expeditiously.
R. M. K.

One of the gleams of amendment with which the lingering, though fatal pulmonary malady of the Emperor Joseph was chequered, occasioned an extension of Sir R. M. Keith's leave, which he employed (as originally intended) in visiting his family in Scotland.

In August Sir R. M. Keith returned to town, on his way to resume his official duties at Vienna. Being desirous not only to return his personal acknowledgments to Mr. Pitt for that exertion of his influence which, joined to the steady friendship of his sovereign, had carried him triumphantly through a rather threatening official crisis—but (as he writes to their mutual friend, Mr. Dundas) to "be favoured by him with that confidential conversation, without which he should find it *next to impossible to render his services abroad of any essential utility to his country*"—the next day but one was fixed by the Premier for the interview; one it will be remembered which the veteran in politics had long looked forward to with the "able young minister," and which proved in the highest degree satisfactory to both.*

It was not long after Sir R. M. Keith's return to Vienna, that substantial proofs of the value put by the sovereign and his "young minister" on his services, called forth the following graceful acknowledgment:—

* Mr. Dundas, the friend of both, thus writes to Sir R. M. Keith:—"I am much pleased to learn that everything went so much to your wishes before you left Britain. The description you give of your conversation with Mr. Pitt is that which I could easily conceive from the parties concerned. The simplicity of his ideas on all political subjects is one of the characteristics of him, which I have always admired. I hope in God it will continue so, but at present there is no doubt the ball is at our feet; and I trust we shall be completely recovered from all our embarrassments before other nations can be in a condition to look us in the face. If I can be of any use to you in your absence you may freely command yours, with great regard,

H. DUNDAS."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. PITT.

November 20th, 1789.

SIR,

I am extremely grateful for his Majesty's goodness in granting so handsome an addition to my salary; and well aware how much I am indebted to your patronage,* for the ease and comfort of my pecuniary situation.

I have only to wish for an occasion of rendering my zealous services more useful to my king and country; and whenever it may suit the views of government to afford me such an opportunity, it shall be improved to the utmost of my power. I have the honour to be, most gratefully and respectfully, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

One letter more remains (without which the moral picture of the man would be incomplete) that in which, with the real unaffected cordiality of a breast, incapable of harbouring the un-British feeling known by the exotic word *rancune*, Sir Robert gives to his principal, not only formal and official, but personal credit for the increase of emoluments alluded to above.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, Nov. 18th, 1789.

MY DEAR LORD,

I receive with deep gratitude, the fresh proofs of munificence with which our royal master has been

* It must have been with peculiar pleasure that this hereditary patronage was acknowledged by the writer. It will be recollected that not only was Lord Chatham the special patron of Mr. Keith, but also that Sir Robert's own early military command was *entirely and solely* due to him. In both cases too, the strong interest created was the result of a personal interview. No sooner did the young half-pay officer "get access to Mr. Pitt" (the elder), than his "business was done;" and so it was, when in advanced life, he gained admission to the son.

graciously pleased to honour me; and I beg of your Grace to have the goodness to lay my humble and dutiful acknowledgments at his Majesty's feet.

I think myself essentially indebted to your Grace, for the warm interest you were pleased to take in my obtaining that additional allowance; and to Mr. Pitt, for having thus set my pecuniary affairs on an easy and comfortable footing. My only regret is, that I am not placed in a more active scene, where my zeal might become more useful to my king and country. I shall be happy if, when the restoration of the general tranquillity of Europe shall become an object of interesting negotiation, my mission here shall afford me an opportunity of exerting my best efforts to prove myself worthy of his Majesty's favour.

Mr. Hammond is extremely flattered by your Grace's kind remembrance of him. He is beloved and esteemed here, and is well persuaded of my hearty regard for him. Yet you would think him to blame if he did not ardently wish for some solid establishment, where his zealous services could have scope sufficient to justify your Grace's favourable opinion. I will pawn my word that Mr. Hammond will do credit to it in whatever situation you may be pleased to place him.* I have the honour to be, very gratefully and respectfully, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

It was indeed an anxious and melancholy, as well as troubled scene, to which Sir R. M. Keith was recalled, by the increasing illness of his twenty years' public patron, and private friend, the Emperor Joseph; a few affecting particulars of which are given in his letters of that period of affliction and disaster.

* It may appropriately close this somewhat lengthened personal history, to state, that Sir R. Keith brought back from London *full authority to present Mr. Stratton as Secretary of Legation.*

He thus writes to his *sister* on the 23rd of January, 1790.

"This year begins in as turbulent a manner as the preceding one, and I hear of nothing but '*wars, and rumours of wars,*' on every side. Happy are you, my dear sisters, to live in a country where a hostile sword has not been drawn for almost fifty* years; and is hardly to be dreaded for twice as many years to come! I hope I am not mistaken in looking upon Scotland as one of the most flourishing countries in Europe; and, thank Heaven! your internal disputes are confined to election matters, and to those little squabbles respecting personal interests, which are in no danger of disturbing the national tranquillity. The Demon of Discord, in the meantime, has extended his influence throughout the greatest part of the Continent; and there are few countries on this side the sea, where either a foreign, or a domestic war is not already raging, or soon to be apprehended.

"Our winter here is uncommonly melancholy, owing to the declining state of the Emperor's health, and the sickness which a great number of officers of the first families have brought back with them from the unhealthy climate of the Lower Danube. Happily the brave Marshal Laudohn seems to have recovered his constitution by the fatigues and laurels of his campaign. He is now destined to command a *great* army, which is to assemble early in the spring, in Bohemia and Moravia, in order to ward off any blow which may be meditated against this monarchy by the Prussians and Poles. On what grounds the Austrians found these apprehensions, which they are at no pains to conceal, I really don't know; but everything is preparing here, as if a war with these powerful neighbours were almost inevitable.

* Alluding to the Rebellion in 1745.

"The Turks talk much of the ardour of their young Sultan to make the third campaign of the war *in person;* but they are at the same moment, nibbling at a pacification; and I am one of those persons who believe that private intrigues in the Seraglio go farther in deciding all material questions in that empire, than the ablest reasonings of the most consummate politicians. Enough of my trade. The Emperor's malady grows, alas! every day more alarming; but as the spring advances, some hopes are entertained of the salutary effects of a more favourable season. My life, meantime, is very uniform, and a little *dowie;* * but I have health, competence, and contentment of mind, so that my lot is an enviable one. I have a favourite scheme for hiring a handsome and pleasant country house in the spring, and of planting my cabbages, I hope, more cheerily. My colony is extremely thin. Lord Thanet and General Hyde are the chief pillars of it. But I have my two trusty chums, Stratton and Hammond, who are excellent companions. I long for a plan of your *college,*† to which I will subscribe *when,* and *what* you please. Adieu, my best friends, I embrace you all cordially.

"R. M. K."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

February 11th, 1790.

WHAT I have to tell you from hence, my dear Anne, is indeed very dismal! The Emperor is drawing very fast to the most melancholy catastrophe. The danger of a fatal explosion in his breast, is in the highest degree *imminent.* His physicians have given him notice of this; and there is no describing the calm composure with which he continues to transact almost the whole business

* Moping—melancholy.

† The Edinburgh University buildings.

with his *own pen.* He receives two or three of his old chamberlains every evening in his apartment, and joins in the conversation, without mentioning his malady. He has given directions for many things in the event of his demise, and likewise for the christening of the child which the Archduchess will bring into the world at the end of this month. He has sent for his brother, the Grand Duke, from Florence, and he is expected in about ten days.

I am greatly afflicted at the sufferings of the monarch, and I will add that the enemies he may have can wish *no aggravation* to his present distress;—amidst a Turkish war, the near prospect of a quarrel with Prussia and Poland, the Netherlands lost, a general discontent among the lower classes of the people in many provinces, an incurable disease,—and, alas! no female hand near his pillow, to administer some comfort in every cup of those medicines he must take, though ever so inefficacious! His intentions were always good; though he was often mistaken, both in plan and method. He has given the best proofs of his hearty wish to correct former errors, by restoring to many of his subjects their ancient privileges. But enough of this affecting subject. He has been *kind, very kind* to me for twenty years. I write from *honest feelings,* but remember for the sisterhood, and their particular friends alone. I shall do so again as soon as the Imperial tragedy is concluded, and the curtain has fallen. Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, February 13th, 1790.

My Lord,

I am very sorry to acquaint your Grace, that some alarming symptoms which have attended the

Emperor's illness within these two days, induced his Imperial Majesty to fulfil this morning one of the most affecting duties of the Roman Catholic religion, by receiving the Sacrament in public. The principal officers of the Court, together with a considerable number of the nobility of both sexes, assisted at that solemn function, in the royal apartment; where it was performed in the most edifying manner.

It is hoped that the symptoms which prompted the Emperor's physicians to entreat his Imperial Majesty to fulfil the above-mentioned duty of religion without delay, may yet yield to the efficacy of the remedies employed; but a fainting fit in the course of last night, and the great difficulty of respiration which induced the Emperor to perform his devotions in public this morning, plainly indicate that he is now in the last stage of his malady; and it is even a matter of doubt, if his brother the Grand Duke (who is expected in eight or ten days) will find him alive.

In the meantime, the monarch has been extremely anxious to remove several of the principal sources of that unhappy misunderstanding, which has of late subsisted between him and the subjects of several of his hereditary states. The restitution of the privileges of the Hungarians, has been followed by a similar measure in regard to his subjects in the Tyrol, who were in a state of general ferment. I am likewise assured that his Imperial Majesty is determined to reinstate the countries of Gallicia and Lodomiria in the enjoyment of the rights which ought to have been secured to them by the stipulations of the treaty of partition. In short, I may venture to assure your Grace, that the Emperor is seriously bent on employing the remainder of his days, in recovering the hearts of his subjects as much as possible, by a repeal of many of those laws which, in the space of a few years, had in a great degree alienated

them. To this plan of conduct, his Majesty is not only instigated by the sincere desire of correcting the errors of his government, but by the very urgent motive of employing the most effectual means to frustrate such hostile plans on the part of Russia, as were built on the growing disaffection of the Austrian subjects, both in Hungary and Poland. It is thought that the Grand Duke * will very heartily join in putting the finishing hand to all their salutary retractations. I am informed from good authority, that it is the Emperor's intention (ever since he sent the pressing invitation for this Prince's return to Vienna) to declare the Grand Duke Regent of all the hereditary dominions, at the moment of his arriving here.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, February 18th.

MY LORD,

I must discharge a melancholy duty, in endeavouring to avail myself of the bye-post, to acquaint your Grace that between nine and ten o'clock last night, the Archduchess was delivered of a daughter; and I am very sorry to add that the consequence of the event proved so fatal to the Archduchess herself, that she died this morning about six o'clock. The new born infant is so weak that it was immediately christened, and its life is still thought to be in danger.

It may easily be conceived how great the shock occasioned by these complicated disasters has proved to the Emperor, whose health continues in the same very precarious state as for some days past.

* Afterwards the Emperor Leopold.

Such an afflicting scene as will present itself to the Grand Duke of Tuscany * on his arrival at the Imperial Palace, can hardly be paralleled !

I have the honour to be,
R. M. KEITH.

P.S.—I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character of that Prince to venture any prediction respecting his future reign. But the valuable qualities on which his subjects place their chief reliance are his love of economy, good order, and justice. They believe him averse to war, and hope that his first endeavour will be the restoration of general tranquillity.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

February 20th, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTERS,

My letter of the 13th will have in a manner prepared you for the dismal catastrophe which has now taken place, after such a succession of disasters as has been most affecting, and can hardly be equalled. On Wednesday evening the young Archduchess (consort of the Archduke Francis) was brought to bed of a daughter, and the consequences of her childbirth proved so fatal, that she *died* next morning ! The daughter is in a very precarious state of health.

The Emperor had been in imminent danger for more than a week. His sufferings were *incessant*, and he not only bore them with the most exemplary fortitude, but continued (at every possible interval) to employ his own pen with the utmost calmness, in directing the affairs of State and in taking leave of his friends and family.

* Father-in-law to the interesting deceased Princess, and brother to the Emperor.

At five o'clock this morning he expired! peace to his shade, and impartial justice to his memory! His brother the Grand Duke (now King of Hungary) is hourly expected. What a shocking scene will present itself to his view on arriving in his new dominions!

I send this along with the government dispatches, by a servant of my own, to England. You will easily conceive how much I am hurried at such a crisis. I have only time to embrace the sisterhood with the utmost cordiality. I am well as you could wish me.

God bless you all,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, March 13th, 1790.

My two last letters were so melancholy, my dear Anne, that I am determined to talk no more about dead Princesses and Emperors, but to acquaint you that his Hungarian Majesty arrived *last night*, in perfect health, and that the sun shines uncommonly bright *this morning*. May it be the propitious omen of a sunshiny reign! There are excessively black clouds both in the south and north; let us hope that, with care and prudence, they may be prevented from bursting. The new-born Princess is getting quite well. The Queen and *twelve* more of her children (for she has fourteen in all) is expected here in May, and that will make the town lively. There is to be a coronation in Hungary, about July, and perhaps one in Bohemia. I am no lover of shows and crowds, but if precedent and fashion require my presence (which I rather doubt) it shall be forthcoming with a good grace. There never was so mild a winter, nor so promising a spring. I have secured a *charming* garden, with a very handsome well-furnished house, in the suburbs, where I hope to pass many pleasant and

healthy days. It is only ten minutes drive from my town-house, and I intend to remove to it the first fortnight of April. The Pergens and Thuns are recovering from their depression; and all Vienna on the gaze to watch the auspicious dawning of the new reign. Their King is possessed of great talents, and is a lover of justice, and much reliance is placed on his pacific disposition.

Now, my dear Anne, having begun my letter as becomes a plenipo, let me come to my own great affair, as a quondam Edinburgh collegian. I approve entirely of the plan for my subscription, such as you and Dr. Robertson have arranged it, both with regard to the fifty guineas in acquittal of my beloved father's promise, and the fifty guineas more for myself. Let it be put in execution immediately; and close the transaction by delivering my hearty good wishes to Dr. Robertson for the speedy completion of the laudable undertaking. You do not tell me when the university buildings are to be begun; neither *will* you send me a scratch of the plan. Pray indulge me so far; I want to be *proud of it*, if I can. You wonder I never asked our brave old *compatriote*, Laudohn, to be a subscriber to it. Why, truly, because he is as poor a marshal as any Highlander of us all; and I could not put him in the dilemma of refusing to subscribe at all, or to the inconvenience of such a donation as he would think a becoming one. My reason, methinks, is good.

Tell the Duchess of Buccleugh that I acknowledge the justice of her wrath, and like her the better for it. But that her Grace may lay her account (and I say the same of the Duke), with finding me, in the evening of my life, a safe, a cheerful, and truly attached *crony*. I am laying in a precious stock of anecdotes and observations on all manner of great men, and great events, which, if properly and sparingly dealt out to

you *all*, round a clear burning coal fire, will make you lick your lips again! The next six months will add considerably to them, else I am much mistaken! Tell me in return all that concerns the worthy folks with you. I love to *keep up the chain and brighten it carefully!*

I embrace you all with true affection,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, April 6th, 1790.

Good day to you, my dear sisters! I hope you are all hearty, and enjoying with comfort the blessings of good government and prosperity which reign in your *happy island.* More than one-half of the rest of Europe is seized with a *democratic lunacy;* and the country in which I reside is engaged in one war, and fears that a Prussian or Polish one will break out shortly. The new King of Hungary has the most humane and pacific disposition, and he is unquestionably doing his *utmost* to restore peace where it has been interrupted, and prevent the extension of the war. But it is extremely difficult to foresee what will be the result of his overtures at Berlin. An answer to them is expected in a few days, and we shall then be able to form an opinion with regard to futurity. King Leopold * has already gained the hearts of his subjects in this part of his monarchy by a voluntary offer (made at the moment of his accession) to restore to every province, and every rank of men, ALL their ancient rights and privileges. I have been this morning at Court, to assist at the ceremony (a very splendid one) of the states of Lower Austria, swearing allegiance, and doing homage to their sovereign.

* His election as Emperor had not yet taken place.

It made the tears come into my eye to hear the loud and hearty shout with which that oath was pronounced, *aloud*, by the whole assembly.

This King will justify the opinion of his subjects, by the mild and equitable tenor of his internal government. He has, in a reign of twenty-five years in Tuscany, proved that he is a lover of justice, of good order, and tranquillity. Yet he must now carry on with great vigour (and does so) the most extensive military preparations on the side of Bohemia and Moravia, and at the same time, prosecute the war with the Turks. Marshal Laudohn is to set out in a week or two to take the command, but all hope of peace is not yet *wholly* lost. My poor late Emperor will soon be forgotten: his life was unfortunate, and his end melancholy; and his successor is certainly the most proper man alive to heal the wounds which Joseph's precipitance had made.

Count Pergen,* as Grand Marischal of this province, was the head man at the homage to-day; and his son Pepy (as Master of the Mint) presides at one of the great tables when the States dine at Court. The former is to retire from all his employments, with the esteem of his sovereign and his country. He retains the *whole emoluments* of his offices; which is a handsome recompense for his long services. He will now enjoy easy circumstances, and domestic comfort. I am just about removing to my *charming* garden. I assure you, my dear sisters, that, without losing a grain of my natural cheerfulness, I am growing very fond of a *snug habitation;* and feel a vocation to become a proficient in gardening! Let me once achieve some *important service* to my country (which the *pacification* may offer, after

* The husband of the Madame de Pergen, so constantly mentioned in the correspondence, as the most intimate friend of Sir R. M. Keith.

all these princes are tired of quarrelling) and then you shall see me plant my cabbages with great glee, and some *skill*, within the precincts of your happy island! Adieu.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, May 8th, 1790.

I HAVE had a busy time of it, my dear sisters, for several weeks past, in employing my utmost efforts to give efficacy to our King's benevolent purpose of restoring the general tranquillity. I cannot hitherto boast of my success; but the commission is both *honourable* and *agreeable* in the highest degree; and, happen what may, I am sure that I shall have a good claim to the approbation of all parties.

The King of Hungary is indefatigable in restoring good order and general contentment throughout his extensive dominions. It is no easy matter, after all the confusion and discontent which the hasty measures of his late brother had created; but with perseverance, and that real benevolence which belong to his character, there can be no doubt of his attaining, some time hence, that desirable object. His Queen, and twelve young children will arrive here next week; this will enliven our good city of Vienna, which, in truth, stands in much need of it! I am to present my credentials to the new King to-morrow; after which I shall remove to my garden-house, which is near enough to be constantly at hand for every sort of business. I have also a letter from our King to her Hungarian Majesty, which I shall deliver on her arrival. I have seen that Queen here formerly; she is a very estimable, though by no means handsome, princess; and her large family has been brought up with sense and simplicity.

The Diet of Hungary will be opened on the 6th of June, and it is supposed that in a month after, the restoration of the ancient constitution of that kingdom will be so far completed, to the satisfaction of sovereign and subjects, that the coronation will take place at Buda. The ambassadors will be invited: and I shall or shall not undertake that expensive and troublesome journey, according to the orders I shall receive from home. The election at Frankfort will be brought on in July; and if all goes on as smoothly as there is reason to believe, his Hungarian Majesty may receive the Imperial crown in September or October. I thank my stars that I have nothing to do at *that* stiff ceremony! All these fine shows will afford great entertainment to our fine folks, provided a new war in Germany can be prevented. If, unfortunately, the sword must still be drawn afresh, I fancy it will throw a great damp on each of these splendid assemblages.

The Hungarians are preparing to display an *old-fashioned,* but excessive magnificence in the dress and manners of their country. The Germans at Frankfort will launch into all the frippery and finery of the *quondam* French nation. The French, in the mean time, will be *cutting each other's throats* by way of amusement, and to prove that *Liberty is the best of all blessings!* They have bit the Brabanters and Flemings, who are aspiring to the glory of having *no government,* and three or four civil wars *at a time.* My dear Anne, this enlightened age of ours is exceedingly nonsensical; and it would seem that steady judgment, and sound principles have taken refuge in our happy island *alone.* Let us persist in this fair and sensible career; and England will have every reason to be proud of the part she acts in Europe!

What a superb letter this is, my dear sisters! and how becoming the pen of a sagacious plenipo! All

Kings and Emperors, and deep politics! I am sure you are delighted with your brother for these two ponderous pages. But this shall descend to men and things, and treat of friends and cronies. Madame de Pergen is recovering from a long indisposition, and Marianne quite well—she and her husband *like* Denmark, which surprises *me!* They knew my friend Hammond here, and will receive him kindly at Copenhagen. My faithful chum, Stratton, is hearty and contented. He has *now* good heart, and ambition to go on in his profession. He is *a valuable young man*—tell his sisters so.

As for me, I am a cheerful, fresh old gentleman, and an assiduous negotiator. Where, and to what effect, you shall know *hereafter*. I am now trying to complete my claim to *otium cum dignitate* (you love latin) in the evening of life. God bless you, my dear friend, and send us a happy meeting!

I must tell you a singular anecdote about the ninth coronation in Hungary. The archives of that country have been rummaged up, to get everything cut and dry, for the ensuing ceremony; and the names of three *Scotch families* have been found, who have been naturalised in that kingdom, and have all the rights of Hungarian gentlemen! They are Gordon of Park, Coutts of Auchterfoul, and Danson of Danreith. If you meet with any of them, tell them they may appear with whiskers, and the Hungarian dress, at Buda in July, and will be received with *distinction*.

I shall be happy to receive your sketch of the new College. But tell me also how your new *town* progresses—Auld Reekie is my hobby, or rather New Reekie, for I *despise* the old one, and it is the *only* old thing I despise; for I love my old cronies, habits, and connexions better than ever. Yours, very heartily,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, July 8th, 1790.

I CONFESS, my dear sisters, that I have been, for the last two months, but a lame correspondent. I have tugged at my oar with might and main; and thought myself in a fair way of reaching the harbour. The business has, however, taken a different turn, and within these few weeks the political traffic has been removed to Reichenbach, in Silesia; where a considerable number of the plenipotentaries are now endeavouring to lay the groundwork of a general accommodation.

The disposition is conciliatory on all sides; but where so many jarring interests are to be reconciled (at least in a certain degree,) it is a difficult, and can hardly be a speedy negotiation. If once we get the preliminaries agreed on, and an *armistice* established, the horrors of a new war will be obviated; and all the matters of a secondary nature may be maturely weighed and discussed. The new King of Hungary has given proofs of his love of peace; and will make considerable sacrifices to obtain it. The state of confusion in which the late Emperor left his extensive monarchy, renders peace the most desirable of all objects to his successor. The Diet of Hungary is very turbulent, and no time can yet be fixed for the coronation; when a pacification shall become certain, matters will go on more smoothly in Hungary, and also at Frankfort, when the election will in that case be almost instantaneously decided. I am interrupted, as happens to me, three or four times every morning, and will return to you, my dear sisters, on *Saturday*.

July 10.

Matters are nearly in the same state, my dear Anne; but the hope of peace is *prevalent* everywhere, and I

begin to think that the Spaniards (finding themselves disappointed in regard to French co-operation,) will soon bring down their spirit to relinquish the greatest part of their foolish pretensions.

As to *France*, the fever runs higher and higher! the course of it must end in civil war, *sooner or later*. This I hold to be an *infallible* prediction; and on its confirmation (notwithstanding a million of civic oaths,) I *stake all my political sagacity*. I am sorry to say that this French folly has proved contagious in *almost every corner of Europe*. But enough of these cloudy politics: let me talk to you of brighter things. We are to have fine matrimonial doings here in next September. The King and Queen of Naples are coming, with their two eldest daughters, who are to be married *forthwith* to our two eldest Archdukes. There is a third intermarriage equally settled between those royal families; that of the Prince Royal of Naples with our third Archduchess; but each of the parties being now only *thirteen* years of age, the nuptials are not to be celebrated for four or five years to come. The King and Queen of Hungary, with their *two* coronations and *two* marriages, will have their hands full of work between this and the winter. If the peace is made, their Sicilian Majesties have expressed a wish to be present at the Frankfort coronation, a show at which I have not the smallest wish to assist. All my social and convivial passions are (thank Heaven,) as strong as ever. But my taste for royal banquetings and princely junketings have left me long ago, and all my comforts are centered in *narrow circles*—my sisters and friends.

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

[*Confidential.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, July 23rd, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I send one of my servants to-morrow to England, with the foundation of a peace in this part of the Continent, and I trust that the superstructure will be perfected in a short time, and to general satisfaction. This I tell to the *sisterhood alone*, and for their *private* information; with this additional circumstance, that if there be any real merit in preventing the extension of hostility, their crony Murrays-hall,* may honestly claim a great share in it. This is a truth no mortal can, or will deny.

I wish somebody (equally well informed) would assure me that our quarrel with Spain is in as fair a train of adjustment. I am in hopes that the case *is* such; for I never can figure to myself that Spain can be rash enough to risk a single combat with England; and the French, amidst all their madness, seem at least to have kept hold of one wise maxim, that of steering clear of all quarrels with foreign states. But there is no foretelling what turn the unaccountable politics of the National Assembly may hereafter take!

But I leave these matters to the explanation of futurity. I am, in the meantime, sincerely glad, that *Cousin Kitty*† has played her cards *womanfully* (there's a compliment for your sex) and brought her matters to bear so successfully. I am in a *monstrous* hurry, having a score of letters to write.

I am disappointed at finding that there is little

* The writer himself, so designated from his Scottish property.

† A confidential *cypher* name for Sir R. M. Keith, in his *family* correspondence.

chance of seeing their Neapolitan Majesties here along with their daughters. It was their intention; but there seems to be no small apprehension that the French disease of *regeneration* may break out in Naples or Sicily; and therefore prudent sovereigns must not go too far *afield*. No contagion was ever more likely to diffuse itself than that of — "Down with the priests, the nobility, and all sorts of distinction." That the *mob* should bellow thus, is matter of no surprise. But that the nobility of France should supplicate for *degradation*, is inconceivable! I am glad (for amusement's sake) to have lived in the strangest, and most *topsy-turvy* of all ages. Since these things were to happen, I am glad to be an eye-witness of them.

What a grave and torpid nation we Britons are become! We have not a grain of that beautiful genius, which overturns all the maxims of government and state policy, which have led mankind in trammels for these five hundred years! *Basta!* if we are not a HAPPY nation, there exists not one in that predicament upon the face of God's earth!

But to return to my own pacification. The finishing hand will be put to it in a Congress, to be held, some six or eight weeks hence, in a Greek or Turkish town (Bucharest, or Crajova in Wallachia) at the distance of seven or eight hundred miles from home. However, as I believe that it will please our gracious sovereign to order your brother to crown the salutary work, pray be not surprised if the Gazette informs you that I am setting out for one or other of those outlandish citics.

R. M. K.

A few extremely valuable letters from the late Lord Auckland, on the politics of this eventful time, at whose centre circumstances had placed one of the acutest of

observers, will come in appropriately, as a farther introduction to the Congress alluded to in Sir R. M. Keith's concluding letter.

The first thus opens, or rather renews the correspondence.

Lambeth Palace, Jan. 29th, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is a circumstance to which I look forward with great pleasure, amidst the new duties which I am about to undertake at the Hague, that I shall have frequent occasions of corresponding with you, and of renewing those old habits of intercourse and friendship with you, which have been long interrupted by the varied peregrinations of my life; but which I have ever recollected with a just and true sense of the value of your society and good opinion. I will write to you as soon as I arrive at the Hague; and I can venture to say that you will find me a punctual correspondent during my residence there; and sincerely desirous to receive and profit by your information and instruction; *et apparemment dans les circonstances actuelles, et eventuelles de l'Europe, il y aura abondamment de quoi s'entretenir.*

The day of my departure is not yet fixed, but the vessel which carries my baggage and part of my servants sailed this morning. My dislike to sea will induce me to go by Calais, Brussels, and Breda, and probably in about ten days.

I am, my dear Sir, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

P. S.—We are happily in this country without news of any kind.

[*Secret.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, March 19th, 1790.

You must pardon the hurry in which I write, under the circumstances of having a company to dinner, the individuals of which are new to me, and might not make due allowances for me if I were to keep them waiting, and I do not think it right to detain your messenger till the evening.

I arrived about eight or ten days ago. Mr. Fitzherbert leaves this place to-morrow morning. I am now settled here, and wish you most frankly to understand that I shall be happy to correspond and co-operate with you to the best of my ability. When I say little, or when long intervals elapse between my letters, attribute my silence to the true cause—the want of materials that may be new to you.

The sentiments of our government will best appear from the dispatches carried by this messenger. The King's ministers are, I think and trust, most unanimously and firmly of opinion that we ought to contribute to restoring to the Court of Vienna her revolted provinces; so far limited, however, as that their constitution and privileges shall be secured to them against any encroachment of their sovereign, by the guarantee of Great Britain and her allies. But circumstances do not allow us to proclaim decidedly this sentiment; nor are the provinces in question yet ripe for it.

As to the allies of Great Britain. The leading persons of this country give me, after full conference, ample assurance of their being at length satisfied that such a result of the business would give the best and most natural barrier between them and their French neighbours; and I venture to assert that they will act cordially with us, to the full extent of their means.

[*Confidential.*]

As to his Prussian majesty, *c'est bien autre chose!* He has brought himself to acquiesce in our objections to declaring the independence; but I have the fullest evidence that nothing less than absolute and inevitable necessity will induce him to contribute by word or deed, to replacing the Netherlands under their old government. But besides, his treaty with the Porte commits him almost irrevocably to everything that can tend to increase the confusion of the world; and without any other provocation than the Count de Herzberg's desire to deprive Austria of Galicia and the Netherlands, and to give to Prussia, Thom and Dantzic, and an equivalent for Galicia from the Poles. And all this, at the expense and risk of other powers, who have neither interest nor the cause of justice to engage them in the enterprise.

I send you all the papers; but though *most sacredly secret,* I think it probable you will have ere now found means to get them. They only went two days ago to England, where I think they will meet with a very cool reception, as they do here. The answer to Mr. Ewart even went further, particularly as to an alliance with the Porte, Poland, and Sweden, *les parties honteuses de l'Europe.*

I passed two or three days at Brussels; and saw all the leaders of the different violent factions. But with all their detestation and rage respecting each other, they continue cordially to profess an abhorrence to any idea of recalling the House of Austria. My accounts from France continue (according to my construction of them) to show a continued progress to further confusions, and in the result, perhaps to a separation of the French provinces. 'Tis well you are a good *decypherer;*

In haste, most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, April 6th, 1790.

My dear Sir,

Lauzun arrived here with the enclosed very important papers this morning; Basilico came with him, and brought dispatches of the same date, which I have forwarded to Berlin.

The letters to Berlin are of great detail, and written with remarkable force and perspicuity; and such as ought to have the effect which the King and his ministers wish to produce. It must be confessed, even by the most zealous friends of the Berlin Cabinet (and I am far from a lukewarm one) that the late circumstances which have taken place, are at least, exceptionable. In the first letter which I wrote to Mr. Ewart from this place, I expressed strong apprehensions that Monsieur de Herzberg was going much too fast for us to attempt to follow him; exclusive of the extreme danger of precipitating into an unprovoked war, and the indecency of taking as the ground and object of the war, the demand of the surrender of Galicia to the Poles, for an equivalent to be made good, either by the Turks or the Belgic states, or both; and an equivalent from the Poles to Prussia, for the trouble; and exclusive also of the utter unreasonableness of expecting England and the United Provinces to support these projects, to which they are not called by any sense either of interest, or of policy, or of justice. It is a wonderful circumstance, that the Court of Berlin should not feel that it is become the most pressing consideration with all sovereigns and all governments, to combine in restoring peace to mankind, for the sole purpose (if there were no other) of re-establishing the ancient ideas of order, and of civil

and military subordination, all of which are shaken to their centre.

As far as I understand the purport of these dispatches to the different belligerent powers, (and I have had great pleasure in observing the origin of the plan, and its progress to maturity, among his Majesty's ministers,) it is the King's meaning, not merely to propose a general armistice, for the *purpose of a Congress*, to enter into a discussion upon the general grounds which are stated, "but also explicitly to offer his mediation;" and I take the liberty to intimate this, because, though it is not expressed in the dispatches addressed to you, it seems there to be implied. If the King of Hungary is *not tied hands and feet* to the Court of Petersburgh, he will accept this great proposition, which you are authorised to make to him, *bonnement et franchement;* and the Turks, upon your letters to Sir R. Ainslie, will do the same. I mean, as far as the armistice goes, and the appointment of plenipotentiaries to a Congress; with a request to the King to give his mediation, and also that of the States General, which I conceive would be right, both to add some degree of weight to the business, and from other obvious considerations.

My position is, that, if peace, or an armistice takes place among the northern nations; if the King of Prussia acquiesces in the earnest recommendation of the King; and if the Court of Vienna should then fairly and handsomely throw the arrangement of the Belgic Provinces upon the good faith of the King, and his allies; still maintaining the moderate and conciliatory language with which he has opened his reign; that the business might be accomplished, by our forcing the Brabant leaders, whoever they may be at the time, to send deputies to the Congress, to arrange the mode and terms of their return to their sovereign, or by such other expedients as the circumstances of the moment

might render practicable. At the same time, it must be confessed that amidst the distractions, and violences, and treacheries which are prevailing in the civil and military factions of those provinces, the indisposition towards the Austrian government seems unabated.

We are also liable to be incessantly thwarted by the popular leaders in France, who, both from the distresses which they are multiplying, and the whole course of their conduct, are justly and emphatically called "*les enragés!*" Having laid aside all other religion, the French have now adopted the enthusiasm of giving what they call "Liberty" to all other nations; and, if that holy zeal is successful, all Europe will soon be in a worse state than under the old incursions of barbarous hordes. Adieu, my dear Sir, *Vous avez une belle besogne; dépêchez vous, je vous en prie.**

Believe me, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

The official correspondence of Sir Robert Murray Keith during the first sixteen years of his residence at Vienna, having been perused by, and freely drawn upon by Archdeacon Coxe, in his History of the House of Austria, the fifth volume of which is confessedly based on that correspondence, and on the previous one

* It will be pleasing to those who turn, as they shortly will, from those most able and acute, though hasty and unstudied suggestions of consummate political wisdom and experience, to find how completely they tallied with the opinions and conduct which Sir R. Murray Keith was simultaneously expressing, and pursuing at Vienna; as well as with the less creditable features here animadverted upon, in the conduct and character of other parties in the complicated negotiations of the times. The comfort which Sir R. M. Keith must have derived, from hearing his just and upright sentiments, and straightforward views in public affairs, thus confidentially reflected, from a congenial master mind, at a period of painf responsibility and anxiety, may better be imagined than described.

of his father and predecessor, Mr. Keith, from the same court—it has been deemed superfluous to go over matter so voluminous, and referring to events already become the province of legitimate history; while transactions of a later period, still hovering on its confines, may be elucidated, and the character of the chief agents in them illustrated, by extracts from the same authentic and valuable documents, (chiefly unexamined until now by any historical writer) during the years 1790 and 1791.

The period was one of mighty and eventful changes in the long, carefully-balanced constitution of Europe. And though, in the revolutionary earthquake by whose throes the fondly-cherished equilibrium was first shaken, and then overthrown, the interest of events, deemed during their occurrence of first-rate importance, has likewise been swallowed up—it may be matter of curiosity to the rising politicians of times like our own, when the diplomacy as well as wars of former days are fast becoming subjects of tradition—to know how seriously statesmen viewed, and how sedulously negotiators watched over that "system," as it was called, of European alliances, which a convulsion, subversive of long established principles and ideas, was destined to sweep away.

Many considerations have concurred in recommending for selection, as a specimen of the public character and abilities (otherwise abundantly established) of the subject of the present pages, the "memorable" (as Coxe styles it) or "glorious" (as it is elsewhere designated) Treaty of Sistovo, in 1791. The prominent position then held, as plenipotentiary from Great Britain, by Sir Robert Murray Keith, stamps his record of this thorny and difficult, and hitherto inedited transaction, with peculiar value in a political point of view; while its singular locality, beyond the pale of Christendom, with its corresponding traits of Ottoman superstition

and barbarism (features unique, it is believed, in the annals of European diplomacy) might invest it for the general reader with a charm rarely attendant on conferences and protocols, even had these not been relieved, and their whimsical concomitants chronicled from day to day, in a series of familiar letters, with which those of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, from *her* Turkish sojourn, can alone, perhaps, come into competition.

A further motive, were any wanting, would have decided the choice of this final act of Sir Robert Keith's long diplomatic career. Independently of the publicity elsewhere given to its previous transactions, the idea hitherto followed out in the present work, of giving chiefly such detached portions of correspondence as form a distinct whole—seems especially applicable when the object is to convey a just and precise idea of the public (as previous selections, it is hoped, may have done of the private) character of him who is its subject.

A negotiation for the restoration of peace to Europe, under the mediation of three of its most influential powers, in which we have the unimpeachable authority of one of the ablest among his brother diplomatists for stating that the representative of England "sustained the leading part;" * which, after unexampled obstacles, he succeeded in bringing to a triumphant termination, and with which it formed his anxious, and at length

* The whole paragraph, occurring in a letter from Lord Auckland (then minister at the Hague, and through whose hands the entire dispatches had been transmitted to London), is so honourable to his brother negotiator, that, though prematurely, perhaps, it may be given here. It is dated at the Hague, August 23rd, 1791.

"I felicitate you most sincerely on the final and complete success of the negotiation at Sistovo, in which you sustained the leading part with unexampled patience and perfect address; and at the same time with that dignity, weight, and effect, which it was your object to establish, for the credit of your mission, and to employ for the good purposes of that mission. The result was perfect, and perfectly executed." . . . .

reluctantly granted desire, to conclude his long, toilsome, public career, seems the most appropriate memorial which even partiality itself could wish to perpetuate.

Lest, perhaps, undue importance should seem (not unnaturally) to be attached to a pacification, whose results, however laboriously accomplished, the tempest of revolutionary war soon well nigh effaced from the remembrance of mankind—it may be necessary to go back a little, and to quote the expressions of the historian of the reign of George the Third, regarding a state of Continental affairs in which England, distant as she was from their remote theatre, and unaffected as she might be presumed to be by the issue of the contest, thought it, nevertheless, equally for her dignity and interest to interpose her mediation.

On the critical state of Eastern Europe towards the latter end of the reign of Joseph the Second, and the menacing aspect of the storm which had raged there since the year 1787, on the general tranquillity, Adolphus* (adopting and abridging in a great measure the words of Coxe) thus expresses himself:—

"War was still waged between the Russians and Turks, and it seemed at one time to threaten a fearful extension, though its operations were finally limited to a few of the principal powers. Joseph the Second postponed his junction with Catherine to curb his own rebellious subjects in the Netherlands—a necessity to which he yielded with reluctance; but the temporary tranquillity enabled him to act with more freedom. He had affected the character of a mediator between the belligerents; but suddenly, and while this semblance was continued, marched two columns into the Turkish territory, where their situation was so helpless and

* Adolphus's History of the reign of George the Third, vol. iv. p. 311.

exposed, that their preservation was entirely owing to the magnanimous forbearance of the enemy, who, instead of wreaking deserved vengeance on the heads of their unprincipled invaders, permitted them to repass the Save. The Grand Signor deprecated hostilities by a forcible and manly appeal to the justice and gratitude of the Emperor; but Joseph, eager to signalise his arms, and to share in the spoils of a fallen foe, published a declaration of war, in which he did not even attempt to varnish his aggression with the slightest colour of equity.

"In entering on this war, Joseph's ambition grasped at the recovery of Bosnia and Servia, the acquisition of Moldavia and Wallachia, and the extension of his boundaries to the Dneister. To forward these objects, he assembled an army greater than the House of Austria had ever brought into the field—a force of two hundred thousand men, with two thousand pieces of artillery. The Russians made equally formidable preparations; an army under Potemkin remained on the Bog, while others were judiciously stationed in various quarters, and an armament in the Black Sea was intended to favour the progress of Potemkin. After a vigorous siege, and in the depth of winter, the Prince took Ockzakow by storm, and subjected the inhabitants to all the cruelties and horrors attendant on such an event. This conquest cost Russia twenty thousand men, of whom five thousand perished in the final assault."

It was thus no insignificant or bloodless contest in which three of the most extensive Continental states were engaged; and though at various periods during its continuance, its operations were suspended by dangers from within or without, by which its ambitious aggressors, Catherine and Joseph, found themselves respectively menaced, yet, at every successive opportunity, a war "conducted," says Adolphus, "with prodigious fury and desolation, and in which, had hos-

tilities between England and Spain not happily been averted, all Europe would have been involved," continued, notwithstanding the slow but sure approach of a mightier conqueror, to excite in the breast of the dying and *soi-disant* philanthropic Emperor, sentiments of bitterness and gratified revenge, whose sole excuse may perhaps be found in the utter prostration of his ambitious projects in every other point of his dominions.

In the campaign of 1789, the Turkish army amounting to 90,000 men, was not only defeated with immense loss, by the united Prussians and Austrians, under the celebrated Suwarrow, but the gallant Marshal Laudohn, by the siege and capture of Belgrade, and other victories, cast a gleam of joy and exultation over the last hours of Joseph, who, sinking as he was in the last stage of decline, rose from his bed to receive the news, and attend a Te Deum, in the cathedral of St. Stephen's.

"From successive conquests over the Turks by Prince Potemkin, Prince Cobourg, and Marshal Laudohn, during which, the allies became masters of the whole line of fortresses which covered the Turkish frontiers, the three grand armies, originally separated by a vast extent of country, were rapidly converging to the same point, and threatened, by their united force, to overthrow all opposition, and in another campaign to complete the subversion of the Ottoman empire in Europe."

To the havoc and bloodshed involved in such a contingency, a cessation of hostilities, necessitated by the circumstances of the belligerents, happily imposed a barrier; till the death of Joseph, by opening the way for the accession to the Imperial throne of a monarch of a more essentially pacific character, gave scope for the beneficent and disinterested interposition of Great Britain, to put a period to a war whose horrors, on the part of Russia especially, were an outrage on humanity, and Christendom.

Strong, however, and in some respects well founded, as were the hopes held out by the previous moderation, and present professions of Leopold, of success in this desirable object, they were far from being immediately realised. "In the face" says Archdeacon Coxe, "of repeated protestations, that his only object was to second the efforts of Great Britain for the pacification of the contending powers, the new Emperor, anxious to push his success before the King of Prussia could take part in the contest, rejected" (or rather, as the following correspondence will show, eluded) "the armistice suggested by England, and redoubled his efforts for the prosecution of the war." "During the pause," continues the same writer, "which the approach of the two armies occasioned, the negotiation was resumed, and a convention signed on the 5th of August, 1790, at Reichenbach in Silesia; by which Leopold agreed to enter into an armistice with the Turks, and to open a negotiation for peace, under the mediation of the maritime powers, on the basis of the *statu quo*. A congress of plenipotentiaries from Austria, Turkey, and the mediating powers, (England, Prussia, and Holland), was soon afterwards assembled at Sistovo in Bulgaria; and all the subjects of contention seemed on the point of being arranged by an amicable compromise. The negotiation was several times impeded by disputes in various quarters, and in June, 1791, Leopold's plenipotentiaries, suspending the conferences, even retired to Bucharest.

"By a rare exercise, however, of temper, skill, and forbearance, on the part of the mediating ministers, the negotiation, which had proceeded so slowly at the commencement, was terminated with great rapidity; and the memorable Treaty of Sistovo, which restored peace, and suspended the rivalry between Austria and Prussia, was signed, on the 4th of August, 1791."

Before entering on a negotiation, not only whose eventual success, but its very existence, depended on the personal character and sentiments of the new sovereign of Austria,* we shall have occasion to go back, and gather these from the spirited, and almost dramatic record of a conversation held by him, soon after his accession, with Sir Robert Murray Keith; and the latter's comments on them, and on the counteracting effects of the lingering influence of the celebrated Prince Kaunitz, long totally alienated from England.

The whole tenor of these despatches, in addition to the testimony borne by them to the acuteness and energy of their writer, is pervaded by that genuine, unfeigned solicitude for peace, which, from the most illustrious of soldier diplomatists, the Duke of Wellington downwards, seems to actuate every arbiter of human destinies to whom the horrors of war are personally familiar. It will be seen with what ardour and perseverance the preliminary step of an armistice, to stop the immediate effusion of blood, and compel a similar measure on the part of Russia, was pressed on the mild and pacific new monarch, at their first interview, by a veteran, whom not even his youthful triumphs under a hero whom he loved, could blind to the evils of warfare, or reconcile to the butcheries of Ockzakow and Belgrade.

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, May 11th, 1790.

My Lord,

On Sunday, the 9th inst., I had the honour to deliver to his Hungarian Majesty, † at a private audience, his Majesty's letter of condolence, and my

* Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had succeeded to his brother, the Emperor Joseph the Second.

† Leopold's election as Emperor had not taken place.

new credentials. I accompanied these with suitable compliments, and in exact conformity to your Grace's instructions. They gave great pleasure to the King, who repaid them by assurances equally cordial and expressive.

His Majesty immediately entered into the politics of this critical juncture, by saying that he placed the most firm reliance on the friendly disposition, and salutary views of his Britannic Majesty. That he himself was in great hopes of owing to the King *the greatest of obligations* in the restoration of general tranquillity. That England was at this moment, from the character of her sovereign, the wisdom of his administration, and the national weight and force, the only power which *could render that service to mankind*; and that it would stamp a lasting honour on the British name. That he had seen with much satisfaction the very seasonable intervention of England, in the prospect of an immediate armistice, which he had ascribed to its true motive, that of endeavouring to prevent the effect of a very alarming and offensive treaty, concluded between Prussia and the Porte, the principles and terms of which could in no manner suit either with the upright sentiments, or the pacific dispositions of the Court of England.

That it had been matter of sincere regret to him not to have had it in his power to accept the armistice immediately. I here begged leave to observe that my Court must have seen with great concern the unlooked-for obstacle which had prevented that acceptance. But as every party in the present war, who had a sincere inclination to put a speedy end to it, must acknowledge the urgent expediency of adopting that measure without delay, I trusted that the Empress of Russia would have immediately joined her hearty consent to that which his Majesty had already declared it to be his own sincere and settled purpose to grant.

The King replied that he had opened himself very frankly to Russia, in demonstrating the expediency of putting an end to a war of which he was himself heartily tired. That Russia was in fact not less so. That the Turks were exhausted, and could in no way promise themselves more advantages, even from the improbable success of a third campaign, than from the terms of peace which both Courts were ready to grant them.

Upon my pressing the King very much to give me the assurance that he had employed *all his weight* with the Empress of Russia to bring that princess to consent, without a moment's delay, to a joint or separate armistice, he replied in very positive terms, that he had not only made use of ministerial communications, but had written with his own hand to the Empress of Russia, to evince the sound policy of accepting the King of England's proposition, and that he entertained not the smallest doubt of her embracing it very readily.

I observed that when that measure shall have been adopted, and the field laid open for calm negotiation, I saw every reason to hope that from the dispositions which his Hungarian Majesty so frankly professed, and which, from every prudential motive, I must likewise suppose to exist in the mind of his ally, peace might still be re-established.

"Yes, Sir," said the monarch, "but the great point is that the efficacy of your sovereign's intervention should be felt in time to prevent hostilities. Should these unhappily take place, the scene would be wholly altered. You know how difficult it is to sheathe the sword when once it has drawn blood. We have but very little time left, for my latest letters give me reason to apprehend that his Prussian Majesty who, at first, seemed to have fixed the end of May for the commencement of his

measures of aggression, has it now in contemplation to forestal that period."*

I recurred to the mention of the additional motive which such a supposition furnished for the immediate determination of Austria and *Russia* to close with my sovereign's proposal; representing that the King's good offices would, in all likelihood, prove of great cogency *everywhere*.

"I agree with you on that point," replied his Hungarian Majesty, "and I will fairly own to you that if once an opening could be obtained for deliberate discussion of all these matters, I see no real obstacle to our coming, all of us, to a thoroughly good understanding. I will not talk to you," continued his Majesty, "as if already actually negotiating; but I am not sorry to throw out some of my ideas, in a loose way, to show you what I think may be the means of effectuating an agreement.

"First of all, let me put Galicia entirely out of the question, as the restitution of that province is neither consistent with honour, with prudence, or with justice. I will not ask of you, Sir, to answer me on that head; as I am fully persuaded that your Court has not the smallest hand in that project, and is very far from approving it. With regard to all the rest, I shall readily agree to avoid the mention of any diplomatic phrases, which might impede the commencement of a treaty, in the prosecution of which, I wish to make known my hearty desire to maintain the general *equilibre*, and satisfy all parties in a reasonable manner.

"First, then, the Turks should be replaced in such a state as would render them respectable, though not formidable to their neighbours. They ought not to get

* Leopold's object was to induce Sir R. Keith to interpose with Prussia without waiting for the armistice, which he required the *permission* of Russia to grant.

back all they have lost, because, strengthened as they will henceforward be by an alliance with Prussia, they might be tempted, some little time hence, to suppose that there would be no great danger in the renewal of war, since after three unfortunate campaigns, they had found themselves no losers by it.

"As to myself, I tell you frankly, it is not conquest or acquisition I have in view, but to establish for my dominions a proper and distinct frontier, marked out by nature, and which may obviate all future quarrels with the Turks, whom my predecessors found to be good neighbours, and whom I hope to find such in time coming. Nay, I will add, that I would rather have the Turks in my neighbourhood than anything else excepting the sea, which you Englishmen understand to be the safest, and most convenient of all neighbours.

"With regard to Prussia," pursued his Majesty, "it would seem that the monarch has it exceedingly at heart to make the acquisition of Dantzic and Thorn, and I will suppose that those cities may be of signal advantage to him, and that they are not of such consequence to Poland as to prevent me indulging that wish, provided she obtains some sort of compensation. But I can see no reason why that compensation should be sought at my expense."

After suggesting an arrangement by which this latter alternative might be avoided, the King thus proceeded:—

"By the stipulations I have here mentioned, or something nearly approaching to them, I am persuaded a pacification might soon be completed. You will easily conceive," added the King, "that what I have thrown out is merely the rough, and even random outline, of what I call the means of conciliation; it may be improved or dilated with very little trouble.

"There is but one subject," continued his Majesty,

"upon which I have not touched, and indeed it is a very delicate one; I mean the Low Countries. I do ample justice to the views of the maritime powers, and am convinced that they see clearly what are their own interests as well as mine, in regard to the future fate of that country. But let us now suppose that the King of Prussia declares war against me. His first step would probably be to acknowledge the independence of the Netherlands. The stake is much too great for me not to strain every nerve to recover those provinces. Such a contest could not fail to be long and bloody. Should my arms prove successful, England is already apprised of my unalterable resolution, and she is, I dare say, well satisfied with them. But should the contrary happen, to what straits might not the head of the House of Austria be driven? I shall mention only one, which I give you my word, is the farthest from my intentions, the most repugnant to my interests, and a last and desperate resource, which *dire necessity* alone could in any shape justify—I mean that of tempting France, by the cession to her of a considerable part of those provinces, to take arms in favour of Austria, and to assist her in recovering the remainder. I repeat," continued the King, laughing, "that is only looking at the blackest side of a possible turn of fortune against me; for Heaven knows, that I neither expect nor wish for the interference of France on that side. I am talking of events which a long and unfortunate war might produce; but I return with pleasure to the prospect of a speedy adjustment, through the *wise and kind intervention of England.*"

I replied that even the most distant idea of departing in any exigence whatever, from the stipulated *indivisibility* of the Austrian Netherlands could never be looked upon by the maritime powers as *possible*. "But Sir," said I, "it is evident that the only wise measure

to be embraced at present is an *armistice*—an armistice," added I, repeating the word three or four times with great earnestness, "without any longer hesitation."

"Yes," resumed the King, "and frank and fair dealing afterwards on *all sides*, under the mediation of *your sovereign*. I wish your messenger were again returned from England; pray give me early notice when he arrives."

"That I shall unquestionably do," replied I, "but your Majesty knows what sort of a vexatious scuffle I have to encounter, each time I have any overture to make through your prime minister. It is hard always to find a point of resistance on the threshold of your palace."

"I own it," said the King smiling, "and I am truly sorry for it. But you know so well how to manage matters, that I desire you only to take your own way. Tell Cobenzel, tell *me*, what you wish to make known, and you shall have no reason to complain. I am glad to talk to you *confidentially*, as I have always done complete justice to your personal character, and to your zeal for your master's service. I wish for peace very ardently: *he alone can give it to all Europe;* and I promise you that when I am again in possession of that blessing, I mean to keep fast hold of it, and strive most strenuously to render it as lasting as my own existence."

I looked upon this last phrase as announcing the end of my audience. I therefore hastened to enforce my former arguments, respecting the importance and urgent expediency of the armistice; to which opinion his Majesty assented very readily; and then put an end to the interview in such a manner as to convince me that what had passed in it, left an agreeable impression on the monarch's mind.

Such, my lord, is the precise detail of an interesting

conversation, in which I have purposely suppressed, as superfluous, many of the observations I thought it my duty to make; but I have been particularly careful to adhere very strictly to the letter as well as spirit of every expression which his Hungarian Majesty used, even to the repetitions which naturally occurred in a very animated conversation.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

The expedient devised and carried into execution, for obviating the ill effects of the impracticability (above alluded to, under the title of a "vexatious scuffle") on the part of the Austrian prime minister, is in itself so amusing, and the dispatch in which it is communicated so extremely characteristic of the diametrically opposite and straightforward mode of doing business of the writer, that it must be given at length, notwithstanding some of its most striking phrases having been (in the concluding pages of his History of Austria,) already quoted by Archdeacon Coxe.

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, May 24th, 1790.

MY LORD,

On the same day that I had the conference with Prince Kaunitz, on the subject of the proposal of a separate armistice, I called on the Vice-Chancellor, Count Cobenzel, with a view to convey through him to his sovereign, the knowledge of Prince Kaunitz's very unaccountable behaviour, and the more than cold reception that minister had thought proper to give to the most friendly overtures from my Court.

On the first mention of the matter to the Vice-Chancellor, I found him in a very different disposition from

that of his principal. He told me, in very obliging terms, that although he had not seen my note, which Prince Kaunitz had kept in his own closet, and was alone employed in drawing up the answer to it—he knew from the King* himself, that my royal master's proposal had given him very great satisfaction: that he (the King) looked upon it as a real obligation which he was happy to acknowledge. To this Count Cobenzel added that the answer, which I might probably receive in a couple of days, would be every way satisfactory, and such as my Court had a right to expect. He then paid me many compliments on my personal conduct, and steady good temper in business. To this I replied, that I had ever laid it down as a maxim, not to allow private passion to prove detrimental to public business; that I had fulfilled my duty in representing to my Court the behaviour and language of Prince Kaunitz in their true colours; but that I rejoiced in the hope of finding his Hungarian Majesty's statements widely different from those of his prime minister, for whose incurable failings I felt commiseration: but that I hoped the King of Hungary would not *at this time,* allow his prime minister to spoil his salutary work by a harsh or captious method of conducting it. Count Cobenzel expressed a firm belief that every risk of this nature would be carefully obviated on the present occasion.

I then spoke to him of the ambitious and intolerable spirit of their Russian ally, and particularly of the haughty, as well as unwarrantable pretensions of Prince Potemkin, which, unless immediately abandoned, must prove an inevitable bar in the way of a general pacification. The Vice-Chancellor assured me that Prince Potemkin's claims had never been seriously listened

* It will be remembered that the Emperor was as yet only King of Hungary.

to here, and that certainly Count Woronzow must have acquainted my Court that the Empress of Russia had entirely laid aside all thoughts of such a scheme, and would show the utmost moderation in the terms of pacification.

I told him that the word "*moderation,*" coming from the Court of St. Petersburgh, had always appeared to me a very vague expression; but that it was undoubtedly the interest of Austria to oblige her ally in this instance to *bring back* that expression to its true meaning, and to prove by *facts,* the precise value of what had hitherto been regarded by foreign powers as words of very doubtful import.

Some company, at this moment of our conversation, coming into the room, I made haste to conclude it with this observation. "The first step of your sovereign's reign was to set on foot at Constantinople the proposition of a separate armistice with the Porte. It is now offered to him by the most upright and humane Court in Europe, the one I have the honour to serve; and his ready acceptance of it will be of a piece with his first and fundamental principles in politics." Count Cobenzel said, "I agree with you entirely; but the conclusion of a treaty, *offensive in the strongest sense,* between Prussia and the Porte, makes a great alteration." "It does," replied I, "for it renders it more difficult than formerly to obtain the *Porte's* consent to such an armistice. But with regard to his Hungarian Majesty, it adds a tenfold motive for his thanking, and fulfilling the desire of that Power which offers so handsomely, to recommend that armistice at Constantinople." Here our conversation ended. I am to see Count Cobenzel again in a day or two.

I have already transmitted to your Grace the particulars of a conference I had with Kaunitz on the 23rd instant, in which the haughty inflexibility of that

minister's character was even more conspicuous than on any former occasion.

In consequence of the last of Count Cobenzel's notes (copies of which are annexed), I had a conversation with the Austrian Vice-Chancellor, of which the following are the principal details. Count Cobenzel, after hearing attentively what had passed in my conference with the Prince, said, with great openness, "I thank you for this visit; I had requested it of you *at the desire of my sovereign.* I was afraid of Prince Kaunitz's haughty manner and inflexible demeanour; and am therefore directed by the King himself to soften and explain whatever may have hurt you, either in the Prince's language, or in the *note verbale* which he has put into your hands. I declare to you, in the frankest terms, that my sovereign wishes sincerely for peace, and is most anxious to embrace (in as far as his engagements with Russia will permit) the very kind and beneficent proposition brought forward by your Court. You know," continued he, "all the foibles of Prince Kaunitz; and you are too considerate not to have a great deal of indulgence for a man of *eighty* years of age, whose faculties begin to sink under the load of those years, and whose temper grows every day more and more intractable. Let us draw a veil over his weaknesses, and let you and I (who are the servants of a monarch who heartily desires peace) endeavour to give a different turn to all this business."

I replied that his Hungarian Majesty, who could not be ignorant of the glaring foibles of the Prince, must undoubtedly feel how dangerous it was to have his intentions thwarted, and his views misrepresented by the pen of his prime minister. That, in my opinion, the conduct and language of Prince Kaunitz was calculated to create wars, if none such had been impending, and that as foreign Courts could alone form their

judgment of the sentiments of the Court of Vienna, from the communications given in *writing* by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I must take the liberty to observe that my Court could not fail to conclude, from the paper I held in my hand, that the King of Hungary rejected the King's proposition, and had no inclination to prevent the extension of hostilities.

He said with the utmost earnestness, "Your remark is perfectly just; but let us try, nevertheless, every means of avoiding this painful dilemma, and proving the sincere solicitude of my Court to meet with due gratitude the friendly overtures of the King of England." He then launched out into a long and, indeed, very candid explanation of every passage in the *reponse verbale* which has a doubtful or an improper meaning. This brought on a conversation of more than an hour, in which Cobenzel employed his utmost eloquence to convince me, that in the mind of his Hungarian Majesty every sentiment reigned which the King of England wished to strengthen, and that the answer of Prince Kaunitz was *not* that of his royal master.

"In that case," resumed I, "take back this paper, and give me the real answer on which my Court can rely." "That, alas! cannot be done," rejoined he, "but any other mode of explanation which you shall think proper to suggest, will, I dare say, be adopted." "Sir," answered I, "whatever is said to me by the Vice-Chancellor cannot *invalidate* this paper; neither can I take it upon me to set your words in direct opposition to Prince Kaunitz's, in order to contradict *flatly* what he has given me in writing. But as I am happy to have it in my power to transmit the King of Hungary's sentiments as nearly as I can in his own words, if you, Sir, will see your sovereign between this time and to-morrow afternoon, and procure *his* authority to hold to me, at another conference, a *clear and decisive*

language in respect to the immediate acceptance or refusal of a *separate armistice*, I will (for the advancement of so salutary a work) write down in your presence every word which you shall be commissioned to pronounce; and (as you dare not yourself give me the same in your *own* handwriting) it shall go to England in *mine*."

He agreed readily to this proposal, and proceeded to press me strongly to send a messenger to Constantinople, though he owned he was sorry to repeat that his sovereign was certainly *not* at liberty to embrace a separate armistice without the previous consent of the Empress of Russia.

"This last circumstance destroys all," (resumed I,) "as my orders, of which you have a literal translation in my note, are positive and peremptory. I cannot send a messenger to the Porte, unless his Hungarian Majesty declares formally, that he is willing to adopt that measure *at all events*; and that, though he may not be able to give a written promise to that effect till he has given notice to the Empress, he has taken the unalterable resolution to agree to the armistice, even if that Princess should withhold her consent."

Count Cobenzel, not content with assuring me that his master's hands were absolutely *tied* on that point, begged of me to go with him into the next room, where the Aulic Councillor Spielman sat at his writing-table. This gentleman is the confidential secretary, whose weight with his sovereign is deservedly *very great*. Here the Vice-Chancellor recapitulated a great part of the conversation, asking Monsieur Spielman what he thought of the King's engagements with Russia? This gentleman replied, "They are absolute; and he cannot, without betraying them, consent to any separate measure."

In the end of the conversation, the Vice-Chancellor mentioned that their next reply to the Court of Berlin would be conceived in such fair, and truly pacific terms,

that unless his Prussian Majesty was resolved to draw the sword at all events, he must be satisfied with their offers.

"Gentlemen," said I, "allow me one more observation at parting, and you have my permission to convey it to his Hungarian Majesty. Let the terms you are to propose to Prussia be what they may, let your sovereign deliver *his* sentiments in pure and sterling *gold*. If Prince Kaunitz's pen must be employed to clothe them in words, they will become *lead*, or something more detrimental still.* What a bad thing would it be for Europe, if, in the great question of peace or war, the caprice of every individual should create, and justify hostilities, when sincere conciliation was intended."

According to the appointment with Count Cobenzel, I went to his office this day, at two o'clock. He was *with the King*, and a servant had orders to tell me that he would give me notice whenever he returned. About

* Lest it should be imagined that any degree of personal pique had a share in this strong expression, it may be well to quote the words of the private MS. journal of a deceased traveller of great ability and experience :—

"I dined yesterday at Prince Kaunitz's, as I generally do once a week. Sir Robert Keith dined there likewise; and I had an opportunity of being personally convinced of what I had often heard, I mean the *great attention* the Prince shows him. There were several people of higher rank than he present; but the Prince took no more notice of them than he did of their *footmen*, and addressed his whole discourse to Sir Robert. The conversation, which at this table is generally the most trifling and frivolous imaginable, was both instructive and entertaining: for Prince Kaunitz, who speaks better than almost any man I ever heard, was obliged, by the questions that Sir Robert put to him, to talk upon interesting subjects. There cannot be a stronger proof of the great effect of *personal character* than to see Sir Robert, who is only an Envoy, more respected by the Emperor and all his ministers than the ambassadors extraordinary of Russia, France, and Spain, *put all together*. I by no means think Prince K. in the right for showing so marked a preference to any man, however much he may think him superior to the rest of the company; but this Prince despises the ordinary forms of politeness; and the Emperor himself, when he has any business to transact, is *obliged to go to his house, as he never comes to Court*."

an hour after, Count Cobenzel prevented my visit by coming to *my* house, and after paying me (as he said, by order of his sovereign), the most flattering compliments on my personal conduct, and fairness of proceeding, he took out a paper, which he showed me, with several interlineations, and said, "This, Sir, is what the King has ordered me to say, and to allow you to commit to writing, for the information of your Court." He then read, and I copied word for word, the inclosed note. Whatever are its merits or faults, they must stand on their own bottom. I signed my note in his presence, and that business was over.

"Now, Sir," said I, "you have, with the consent of your sovereign, agreed to set aside Prince Kaunitz. Have you thought of what will happen if he sends me a letter this evening for Count Revitzky? Your minister in London will reason and act from Prince Kaunitz's orders; my Court will judge of his Hungarian Majesty's sentiments from your supplementary explanation. Nay, more, Sir, in the future correspondence of Count Revitzky, it is next to impossible that Prince Kaunitz should not remark that my Court acts on other principles than those his pen lays down. It is not *my* business to point out to you, Count Cobenzel, how you are to prevent such a collision; yet it is a subject deserving of consideration."

"Sir," replied the Count, "I thank you for the suggestion; it is a fair and candid one, and I will answer it fairly; *your* Court will have the consideration for *mine* not to let out our *secret*. You are requested by the King of Hungary, to follow the usual mode of communication through Prince Kaunitz; but to put into my hands his answers, whatever they are, and to wait till I give you a particular explanation from the mouth of my sovereign, of whatever may be harsh or ambiguous in those answers."

"It is, at best," rejoined I, "but an awkward method of doing business, and the sooner an end is put to it the better. But I subscribe to it for the present, and can only say that no bad use shall be made of the confidence which his Hungarian Majesty reposes in me. I shall go on, for form's sake, with Prince Kaunitz as long as I can. But what am I to do with the letter he will send to me this evening?"

"Pray send it back to *me*," said the Vice-Chancellor, "and I will send you *another*, which shall contain a copy of what you have now written down from my mouth."

"Very well," replied I; "Prince Kaunitz began by excluding me from his share of this negotiation; it is odd enough that I should pursue it by excluding him!" (Here, my lord, ends the history of Prince Kaunitz's political career. Heaven forbid that I should hereafter ever insult his ashes!*)

I would not let Count Cobenzel depart without making one essential remark, viz.: "My Court has been anxious to obtain the certainty that no aggression, or even enticement to hostility shall take place on your part towards Prussia. To this I have answered that you neither have, nor can have a thought of taking any step which can bear the most distant approach to it. But, Sir, what are you doing on the side of Turkey? you are going to pass the Danube, and besiege Widdin. What will the King of Prussia say to your thirst of conquest, and the progress of your arms on that side?"

"Say," rejoined Count Cobenzel, "what I declare to

* That these were not empty words of course, is proved by a passage in a *private* letter of the same date to Lord Auckland, inclosing the above dispatch.

"I hope that future events will prove that I have gained a great deal by setting aside Prince Kaunitz's vexatious intervention. But one thing I must *beg* of your lordship, which is, that his humiliating situation at present may be kept *secret*, out of a just consideration for an old and once able and faithful servant of the House of Austria."

you to be true, that no conquests we can make are in the view of retaining them, but only to force the Turks to a speedy peace."

"That is well," answered I, "but write this to Count Revitzky, and let him declare it *formally;* and, when you have done so, there remains another great question to be resolved. Do your Russian allies think as you do?"

"I declare, upon my word," replied he, "that they do, and I will declare the same."

"All good," said I; "and when you have done so, I am not certain that the King of Prussia will believe you btoh, or think it a pleasant circumstance to see conquests made on the promise of their not altering the terms of future negotiations. My opinion, dear Sir, is, that whoever is very serious in the desire of making peace, should set very narrow bounds to his ostentatious attempts at conquest."

Here the conversation ended, to our mutual satisfaction. It only remains for me to request of your Grace, as I keep the letters for Sir Robert Ainslie in my possession, to be honoured with your *precise* commands, whether, in the *prospect* of the armistice, to dispatch the messenger to Constantinople?

R. M. K.

It is hoped that the graphic power and unique nature of the foregoing dispatches may have compensated for their length. Sir Robert Keith having thus, as he expresses it in a letter to Lord Auckland, "laid a foundation for success in future negotiations between his own Court and that of Austria," had the farther, and at the time more important satisfaction of seeing one of his suggestions followed out, by a *direct* epistolary intercourse between the monarchs of Austria and Prussia, whereby all grounds for misrepresentation were set aside, and a thorough and permanent good understanding established. This being the case, the obstacles which chicane and diplomacy might have indefinitely

interposed, quickly vanished, and the Convention of Reichenbach, before mentioned, was entered into in August following, as the basis of a future and general European pacification.

The previous share of Sir R. M. Keith in the pacific overtures of his Court, his position at that of Austria, and, it may be added, the concurrent opinions of nearly all his diplomatic compeers, separately hazarded before the appointment was declared, pointed him out as the natural representative of Great Britain, in her capacity of chief mediator in the approaching Congress. In what spirit he awaited his final instructions, and undertook the welcome office, spite of its unexampled inconveniences, must, in violation perhaps of diplomatic decorum and official dignity, with the exception of the three following letters, be chiefly gathered from those familiar epistles with which their proverbial dulness will be occasionally relieved.

SIR R. MURRAY KEITH TO MR. EWART.*

MY DEAR SIR, *Vienna, July 24th*, 1790.

You have already received, by the courier dispatched from hence in the night of the 22nd inst., the formal and unreserved acceptance of the *statu quo* in the manner required by his Prussian Majesty; and, consequently, all ground of quarrel is, in *fact*, and in *common sense*, done away. To tell you how many onsets I have had with the Austrian ministers, previous to that happy resolution, would be to *slay the slain*. Sufficient it is, that in spite of *two* all-powerful ministers, you and I have had the principal hands in carrying through this salutary measure, which is a benefit (and an important

* The able and indefatigable Resident from Great Britain at Berlin; and her representative at the Convention of Reichenbach.

one) to one half of Europe. I have sent home to England this day *half* the conclusion, in the consent of this Court; you, my dear Sir, will send the other half of the *piece of gold* from Reichenbach, in a few days. Count Luzy wanted to proceed immediately to the camp of the Grand Vizir; but he is to stay till the sanction of the King of Prussia is *brought hither*. But to avoid all suspicion of a double negotiation, Count Cobenzel promised last night to Monsieur Jacobi to send an Austrian courier this day to Prince Cobourg and Monsieur Thugut, to put a stop to all negotiation, should such an one be on foot, with the Porte, till the issue of that at Reichenbach shall be *known here*. With this provision Baron Jacobi has declared himself well satisfied. I think it proper to tell you that I trust no difficulty will be started at Reichenbach; the expressions about the Low Countries are not explicit enough on *either* side; but Count Herzberg gave a note on the 16th to Prince Reuss, which seems to promise *great facility* on that head. The inclosed bulletin will inform you that the Turkish fortress of Czethen has been taken by *assault*. May it be the last feat of prowess in the war! Yours, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. EWART.

Vienna, August 3rd, 1790.

My dear Sir,

After so much fatigue and trouble we may now congratulate ourselves with that success which a few weeks ago seemed to be far beyond our reach. All is now *well*, and, I trust, *unalterably* so. The ratification is already at Reichenbach, and Spielman* returned hither last night. I took an opportunity, immediately

* Baron Spielman, the Austrian Plenipotentiary at Reichenbach.

on receipt of your letter, to mention to both the Austrian ministers the fair and warm testimony you gave to the conduct of Monsieur Spielman. It was listened to with the more pleasure as Prince Kaunitz and Count Cobenzel expressed themselves obliged to your friendly offices during the latter part of the negotiation; and there they did justice to the motives of our Court in adhering to the *statu quo*, and likewise to the fair and candid, as well as firm, principles on which we have constantly acted. I was glad to hear them talk so reasonably on a subject on which I have often found them exceedingly sore. One thing, I think, I have observed, and pretty correctly, yet it has never been openly professed, and I beg it may remain for the present a secret between you and me, that this Court has embraced the resolution of relinquishing all projects of exchange or acquisition on the side of Turkey, at least before the conclusion of the peace. In that case, matters will go well and smoothly at the approaching Congress, and the only difficulty will be to get the Empress of Russia to make her separate peace on the same basis, or to reduce her to the necessity of accepting our mediation, and becoming a contracting party at the Congress. Count Luzy set off this day, and with him my messenger Hislop. I gave him in charge, along with the official instructions, your two letters to Sir R. Ainslie, and added to them my most pressing instances to employ all his weight at the Porte, to fulfil the King's views by an immediate *armistice* and *speedy peace*.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. EWART.

Vienna, Sept. 18th, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

I am heartily sorry that the delay of the return of the Austrian messenger from London has hitherto

prevented my pressing, with that earnestness which I should otherwise have employed, the construction of such a declaration as has been wished for, *previous* to the King of Hungary's departure for Frankfort. This is, indeed, an unlucky circumstance; but it is probably owing to the load of business which the French and Spanish affairs have created in the office during the actual crisis. The King and Queen of Hungary set out for Frankfort on the 23rd. . . . . I congratulate you, my dear Sir, on the progressive re-establishment of your health, and on the near prospect of visiting your friends in Britain. May you enjoy the rest and comfort you have so well earned, and may my endeavours to clench the pacific nail be crowned with full success!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Oct. 6th, 1790.

HERE have I sat, my dear sisters, for this fortnight past, in hourly expectation of a courier with my formal nomination and full powers for the Congress in *Wallachia*, and it is with real regret that I see the season advancing so fast towards winter, when a journey of several hundred miles *out*, and as much *back again*, is no trifle. However, the sisterhood may be assured that I shall undertake it with great alacrity, because I am persuaded I shall be able to do good and to prevent mischief.

You may, perhaps, be told by some idle traveller, that Wallachia is an unhealthy or an inhospitable country. This is *not true;* that country, though greatly exhausted by the war, furnishes everything *for money*, except French wines and articles of luxury, which we shall carry with us, or send down by water on the Danube.

Bucharest, where the Congress will probably be held,

is a large ragged town, but containing between three and four hundred churches (such as they are) and many lodgeable houses, belonging to the Boyars, the chief men of the country, which will be lent to the plenipos on this occasion. We hope and trust that the meeting will be of short duration. The members of it will be, first, two grave Turks, the Reis Effendi, and another; Baron Herbert from this Emperor, Marquis Lucchesini from Prussia, Count Esterhazy from Hungary, Baron Haeften from the States General, and—myself. I shall do my utmost to forward my own departure and that of my three colleagues (Baron Herbert is already at Bucharest) in about three weeks from this date; and as the roads are good, I hope to make the journey in about a fortnight's time. I am determined to travel, and reside in Wallachia with all manner of *comforts* and *conveniences* about me; and you may rest assured, my dear sisters, that my health shall be carefully attended to. The post goes very regularly from Bucharest hither, and though my letters will be of very old date ere they reach you, I promise you they shall be dispatched very *regularly*. I leave all my heavy baggage and a great part of my household at Vienna, and hope to be back here before the new year.

If you choose to see my journey on your best map, it is as follows: To Presburg, Buda, Temeswaer, Orsova, Crajovia, and Bucharest; all at present possessed by the House of Austria. Wallachia is to be restored to the Turks at the peace. The Empress of Russia is obstinate, and will make war or peace her *own way*.

Now, my dear Anne, you will be curious to know if Stratton accompanies me to the Congress. He wishes it, and so do I; but the answer of the Duke of Leeds will determine whether he goes, or remains at Vienna.*

* The latter arrangement was adopted; Mr. S. remained, in Sir R. M. Keith's absence, as Secretary of Legation.

But I have got (somewhat unexpectedly) a young companion for that journey. Along with my last messenger from England, came Lord Galloway's second son, strongly recommended to me. He is not yet seventeen, has had a very *good* education, is stout and hardy, wishes much to learn, and, from what I have seen of him, possesses good talents and an amiable disposition. I have made him exceedingly welcome. He is lodged in my house, and shall see the new scene along with me, amongst Turks, Greeks, and Barbarians. I hope to make an useful man of him in *this line*, which his father wishes him to follow. He starts under the personal patronage of the Duke of Leeds. I have Lord North's *third* son with me here, an amiable and *well informed* young man as any I *ever* met with. He intended likewise to go to Bucharest and Constantinople; but his constitution was for many years very *weakly*. He is now much better; but his father, Lord Guilford, left it to my *conscience* to stop his journey, if I thought it dangerous for his health; and, after mature deliberation, both Mr. North and I were forced to give up a plan which had given us so much pleasure. He will return to England in November, and come out again next year. I need not say how glad I was to repay to this charming young man, some part of the obligations which I owe to his father.

The Hungarian and Neapolitan Courts are feasting at Frankfort, and we suppose that the new Emperor will be crowned there to-morrow. They will *hunt* their way back through Bohemia, and are expected here in the end of the month. The Hungarian coronation will take place on the 15th of November, and at Presburg, instead of Buda. This will save King Leopold a long journey, and much inconvenience. The Neapolitan Court rest here till the month of January. Adieu till to-morrow.

October 9th.

I have detained this messenger till the 9th, and am not yet a grain wiser about my Wallachian journey. But there is every reason to suppose it will take place in less than three weeks. The appointment will appear in the London Gazette, and I shall set out the *moment* it reaches me. Direct your letters as usual to *Vienna.* I leave a careful person to receive and forward my correspondence. All your acquaintance here—the Pergens, Thuns, &c., are well. Madame de Thun's two youngest daughters, (Princess Lignowski, and Caroline,) are actually on the road to England! where, I am sure, they ought to meet with a kind reception.

I did a great pleasure to Monsieur Pergen the other day. An old comrade of his (an officer in Wurmser's Hussars) had been taken prisoner by the Turks, and was deploring his misery in the Seven Towers. I applied, at *Pepy's* * request, for his release, and the Sultan most handsomely sent him to me by my last messenger! Have you, my dear Anne, any comrade you wish to be *relieved* from the Seraglio, or desirous to be sent thither? My hearty good wishes to all my cronies. They will be delighted with the stories I shall have to tell them of my travels. Write to me often—and all your news. I embrace you most cordially.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Nov. 1st, 1790.

A FEW words more, my dear sisters, before I go to the *world's end.* It is not to Bucharest that I am going, as the English newspapers say, (and to make a peace with *Spain!*) but to the dominions of Turkey, to a village

* The German diminutive for Joseph among intimate friends.

called *Sistovo,* in Bulgaria. I daresay that beautiful winter residence is too insignificant to be found in any of *your* maps; but if you cannot discover it, let me tell you that the Grand Signor marked it out with his own dear pen, and that it is situated on the Danube, fifteen miles from Nicopolis, and five-and-thirty from Ruschuk, the birth-place of the present Grand Vizir. I wish the deuce had them both, for making so queer a choice! To mend the matter, I hear they have sent a bashaw thither to prepare *sixty* houses for the reception of *four* plenipos; fifteen houses a-piece—judge what pretty huts they must be! But we have sent down from hence, by the Danube, all sorts of furniture (even to grates and stoves for fire), and I promise you to make a very lodgeable barrack out of my own fifteen. We have three Turkish plenipos to meet us—Reis Effendi, &c., with fine-sounding names—and if I had not other matter to bring forward, I would send you their names to fill up my paper.

Yet, as this is a *very honourable* commission, I undertake it cheerfully, and I purpose to make a peace that will last our *grandchildren.* Marquis Lucchesini (the Prussian), set out this morning; Baron Haeften (the Dutchman), will set out in a week; and I (Murray's Hall*), will follow the republic in two or three days after, or about the 12th instant. We need not leave this sooner, as our baggage will be four weeks on the Danube. I told you in my last all my road to Bucharest. This I am still to pursue. But from thence I have an hundred and thirty English miles to a place called Simniza, on the Danube, from whence we cross over to Sistovo, a place inhabited by half Turks and half Greeks. I daresay, after all, it will turn out better and more comfortable than *calumny* has whispered. I travel like

* The name of the writer's estate, by which Scotsmen are often designa

a Persian Prince, with every sort of convenience about me, and I am determined that neither I, nor any person belonging to me, shall want for any comfort money can purchase. The Turks are said to be very magnificent in their treatment of plenipos; to whom they make a large allowance for provisions, &c. I despise their *piastres*, and if I can forward the work as speedily as I propose, I shall leave them and their piastres with all possible expedition. I give you my word, my dear sisters, I expect to be back at Vienna early in February, with a light purse but a hale constitution. There goes a regular post twice a week between the Congress and Vienna, and be assured you shall hear from me regularly. Direct your letters as usual. Stratton, who remains here as the King's *Chargé d'Affaires*, will forward them carefully. I am heartily sorry that Mr. North's health will not permit him to be of the party, but I shall take my little Galloway Stuart, who is really a very fine lad.

So much for self and Sistovo; now for Kings and Princes. The Emperor came back to us from Frankfort, hale and stout, a week ago; he sets off for Hungary on the 9th, and will be crowned at Presburg on the 15th instant. The Hungarians have made a sad piece of work of it. They have shown a desire to be very troublesome, and have hurt nobody but themselves. I trust they will be wiser in the Diet which follows the coronation. The foolish spirit of the times had led that brave nation to aim at innovation with a vengeance; but as they never really knew what sort of constitution they had in view, they must be contented with their old one. Temper, and the King's goodness, may improve it hereafter. The people in the Netherlands are, I believe, very tired of their anarchy; if so, they will be helped back by England and Holland into their old pasture, and there they may feed and fatten like their forefathers.

The French are the only nation whom nobody *can* help; they can never be restored to their senses but by the heavy blister of a civil war, and applied *hot*—from *head to heel!* I declare that in such cases a civil war is the only true antidote. Spain, if she goes to war with us (as they say she intends), must be in a delirium, for no one can tell why or how she can support it. If she could set Louis the Sixteenth again on his throne, that would be worth all the danger; but how her being *thrashed at sea* can mend his unhappy fate at Versailles, I am at a loss to foresee. My dear Anne, my dear Anne! depend upon it, this part of the globe called Europe has got a *hitch*, somehow or other, and has got either too near the sun or too far from it; for three parts in four of our brains have become addled or crazy! We have the morals and principles of government of African negroes, with the luxury and effeminacy of Asiatic nabobs; and by and by, our models, the French, will enjoy the liberty of—Botany Bay: well do they deserve it!

I hope my Bulgarians are good sort of people; they have no Mirabeaus or Vandernoots* among them: that is one comfort! Now will I descend from my political stand, and amble through the rest of my letter on a Scotch pony. When do you get back to *New* Reekie?† We have here a young St. Saphorin (nephew to the Danish minister), your acquaintance, and a fine kind-hearted lad, who *runs over* with gratitude for the hospitality he met with in Scotland. He speaks of you and many of our friends with true regard, and is so *keen* an Edinburgher, that he tells me with *rapture* he sees a prospect of the *Luckenbooths*‡ being pulled down! I will chat with you, my dear sister, while I can, though

* The leader of the Dutch (so-called) patriots.

† The then recently-occupied New Town, of Edinburgh, where his family had purchased, or were about building a house.

‡ An eye-sore to the fine High-street of the Old Town.

you shall have another letter before I depart. We have a fine autumn, the roads are good everywhere, and a little frost will even mend them. You would laugh if you saw what precautions I take against Bulgarian barbarism. An honest man, with my three carriages in his suite, might sit down in a barn and have all his conveniences about him. This, in my opinion, is a proper use of money. As it is probably the last campaign I shall make among the Turks, I am determined to provide largely against cold and famine.

I have just now seen in my morning walk upon the ramparts of this city, what gave me real pleasure, but which, if it had been exhibited in the reign of Charles the Sixth, or even in that of Maria-Theresa, would have been thought to prognosticate the *downfall* of the House of Austria: the Archduke Francis, heir of the throne, walking in a great-coat, arm in arm with his new married *wife*, in a warm gown, and without a single servant or living creature attending them. This (said I to myself) is sheer good sense, and a strong claim to domestic happiness. You see, my dear Anne, that in some respects the world alters for the better. Every body blessed the couple as they passed. Adieu.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Nov. 15th, 1790.

More last words, my dear sisters; for I will scribble on this sheet from day to day everything that occurs, for your amusement or information. The Emperor is crowning at this very moment at Presburg, and (what will surprise you) one of the persons who puts the crown on his head to-day is his own *fourth* son, Leopold. You must know that instead of choosing out of *four* persons named by the King, a Palatine, or First

Magistrate of the State, the Diet unanimously requested that His Majesty would confer the great employment on that handsome and amiable young Prince, who is already colonel of a regiment of Hussars, wears the dress, and speaks the Hungarian language. No sooner asked than granted—and now, as I told you, he is exercising one of his functions. A subsequent one is to represent to the Sovereign the national *grievances*. This he will do with a gentle eloquence; he is a charming young man, just eighteen.

The Emperor is in luck to be crowned by his near relations; for at Frankfort the Imperial crown was set on his head by his own brother, and his queen's uncle, the Elector of Cologne and Triers. One other singularity—the King of Naples appears at Presburg in the *Hungarian* dress, which gives great pleasure to the nation. The Hungarians will, I hope, recover all their loyalty and good temper. They have made but a silly figure, with all their cavilling, since this King mounted the throne, but he will make them *love him sincerely*.

So much for monarchs; of whom I shall see no more for some time to come. The Dutch minister and I undertake our peregrinations at the distance of one day from each other. We hope to be at Bucharest on the 2nd or 3rd of December, and our *dear Sistovo* is only two days' journey from thence. I cannot help laughing at my *fifteen* houses prepared for me! I intend to carry a common draftsman along with me, to scratch out a resemblance of every odd thing in Bulgaria. You shall one day *admire* my fifteen palaces, and you shall have the portraits of all my colleagues, Turks and Christians! I am called away from this chat. Adieu, my dear sisters. Lord send us a speedy and a merry meeting! God bless you all.

November 17*th*.

Thank Heaven, I have just learned for certain, though rather confusedly, that our disputes with Spain are terminated, and much to our honour and satisfaction. You cannot imagine, my dear sisters, what pleasure this gives me, not only as a patriot, but as a negotiator, going on a very troublesome commission, to the completion of which I should have found a thousand obstacles, if a Spanish war had broken out. I now see the best grounds to hope that pacific sentiments will prevail all over Europe, and that even the haughty Empress of Russia will soon tire of being the only European power at war. In short, my dear Anne, this happy event sets me much more at my ease than I should otherwise have felt.

My Dutch colleague set out this morning; I shall follow him to-morrow evening, and keep close behind him the whole way. This is an act of friendship, for he has but a crazy constitution, and it is a comfort to him to know that I follow him with a number of handy servants, a good surgeon, &c., &c. The weather is as fine as it can be at this season of the year; clear sunshine, and cold; may it last me till Sistovo! I shall meet the Emperor on Friday, and the Queen of Naples on the road to Presburg. He has finished his business there very handsomely. The King of Naples goes a hunting at Prince Lichtenstein's, Prince Auersberg's, &c., in Bohemia; where noble chases and sumptuous feasts are prepared for him, and will not come back to Vienna till the 12th December.

Sir R. M. Keith set out to assist at the Congress at Sistovo in Bulgaria, November 19th, 1790.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Buda, in Hungary, Nov. 22d, 1790.

I CAN only give you a bit of a letter to-day, my dear sisters, as I only stop for a few hours, and have a score of indispensable letters to write. Bad roads, heavy rains, and miserable horses, for the last ten stages; and, consequently, a snail's pace in travelling. But that is *nothing*, for I have every convenience around me of my own, and a patience, attended by good health and good spirits, which stand proof against all trials.

I am afraid that for *five hundred miles*, from hence to our blessed Sistovo, I have nothing but mud and morass to wade through. What care I? more horses, more provisions, more patience, and contempt for trifles, will carry me clear through. He who frets at what he cannot mend, and which does not materially affect his health, or derogate from his reputation, is a *blockhead*. Thousands have waded through the sloughs of Lower Hungary, the Bannat and Wallachia; why cannot *I* do as well, or *better* than they have done? I had the great comfort of hearing from Fitzherbert before leaving Vienna, that his work* was handsomely finished. That event will greatly facilitate mine; for all quarrels amongst great powers are *cousins german*, and breed or annihilate each other. The Russian Dame will become more tractable, and then we may shut the *Temple of Janus* for all Christendom. If we do, I will throw the *key* into the Black Sea, that nobody may open it again in our days.

My young companion Stuart, is an amiable lad, and knows a great deal. I am teaching him *honest* politics, and *practical* philosophy, which is a better thing.

I am forced to make a long circuit from hence (look at your map,) by Arad, to reach Temeswaer. The shorter

* The peace between Great Britain and Spain.

road by Segedin, is impassable. I shall reach Temeswaer in five or six days, and shall write to you from thence. Letters, letters, I beseech you, and a great deal of news; else how am I to be *nourished* at *Sistovo?* Lord send me a speedy conclusion and a safe return! I left all my friends at Vienna, *young* and *old*, in good health. I must finish. Love to my cronies; they must pray for their comrade exiled among the unbelievers. Adieu, my dear sisters. Let me finish this job of work to general satisfaction, and then *Te Deum!* I embrace you all *most cordially*.

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

MY DEAR SISTERS, *Temeswaer, Nov. 29th*, 1790.

I have been dragged hither, through mud and mire, by miserable cats of post-horses, but without any accident; and I have a good heart to undertake the remaining *half* of my journey, though ten times more difficult than the preceding one. From hence to Orsova the whole country is in the state of ruin and desolation, to which the Turks reduced it in 1788. Almost every town and village are laid in ashes, and only a few houses are rebuilt at certain stages, for the scanty accommodation of travellers. I shall set out to-morrow, and shall sleep the night after on the ruins of Caransebes, the place to which *lying* tradition says Ovid was banished; and from thence pursue my journey through the bloody defiles of Meadia, Cornia, and Illova, to the place where old Orsova *stood* two years ago. I shall then enter Wallachia, and stop a few hours at Czernetz, a colony founded by Trajan, and close to the small remains of his stupendous bridge over the Danube. I shall also see the famous island and fortress of Orsova, from the hill of Allion, whence it was lately bombarded.

All this sounds mighty pompous, my dear Anne, but,

alas! I shall see *nothing* on that route but miserable ruins, and a thin population reduced to great distress. But this Bannat of Temeswaer is one of the most fruitful countries of Europe, wherever industry is in any shape exerted; and in a year or two it will again overflow with abundance. A large *three years' old ox* can be bought here, in time of peace, for less than a pound sterling; a lamb for sixpence, and a load of hay, as much as four oxen can draw, for *three and sixpence!*

One very strange thing is remarked by every traveller through the Bannat. The villages are large, though distant, and we meet, by turns, Wallachian, German, Sclavonian, and *French*, nay even *Italian* villages; the inhabitants of which have different languages, religions, manners, features, and modes of government; having no other intercourse with each other than that of mere necessity, and *never intermarrying*. A dash of the Gipsey nation, and a sprinkling of Jews, are met with everywhere, and the whole furnishes a grotesque and singular variety. What do you think, my dear Anne, of going from the Sclavonian village of Falygahasa, where not a word of any of our lingos is understood, to the next village of Charleville, or Marienville, or St. Hubert, where *parlez vous* is the sole language? The French are mostly from Lorraine, sober and industrious people; the Germans from Suabia, strong and active; and I was pleased to find that both nations thrive and grow rich. The Turkish war brought them, on this side, a ready vent for their commodities, and at *ten* prices. So much for the Bannat.

As to Wallachia, we have to expect all the bad effects of Greek despotism under Turkish tyranny; improved by the successive conquests and depredations of all the contending nations. I look for the worst of roads and the most miserable huts for resting places; but I set them at defiance, and only dread a dreary winter in an inhospitable Bulgarian abode. I need be in no hurry to

get there, as our vessel (after a month's navigation on the Danube) has not yet reached Orsova. To get to Sistovo before our household furniture and every article for housekeeping, would be *folly* indeed! We shall therefore make a halt at Bucharest till we hear that our servants have got to Sistovo.

I have had fine weather for the last six days. Should it rain only for four-and-twenty hours, I shall be in the *Slough of Despond,* and shall recapitulate the Pilgrim's Progress with a devout recollection. I thought to find some memorable remnants of Roman buildings on the road to Wallachia, but am sorry to learn that in the last Turkish invasion they have been thrown down or defaced. In short, my dear sisters, I must centre all my comfort in the hope of doing good and deserving the *full approbation* of my superiors. I have already laid in my claim to be relieved with all possible expedition (after my work is finished) from my Bulgarian thraldom. In this point I believe I shall be indulged.

I rejoice at the Spanish peace on every ground, and trust that so good an example on the part of the Dons will make a salutary impression on the Russians. They have just now taken the Turkish town of Kylia (at the mouth of the Danube) by storm; yet I look for a speedy return to pacific sentiments, for how can Russia fight three or four nations *alone?*

You are now half-a-dozen letters in my debt, my dear Anne, and I pray you to repay them with a world of news and anecdotes; for I grow more and more *thirsty* for home intelligence as I draw nearer to the bounds of Christendom. I am glad to hear it affirmed that our Turkish colleagues are reasonable men. That will shorten our work, as I dreaded Ottoman ignorance and chicane. Remember me candidly to those I love, and prepare yourselves to sing Te Deum when I announce my return to Vienna. Health and comfort *be with* you all!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Bucharest, December 12th, 1790.

I ARRIVED here on the 10th, in perfect health, my dear sisters, after all the perils and inconveniences of a most abominable journey. I have not time to-day for description; but this capital of Wallachia is a sink of mud and misery, interspersed with oriental-looking palaces of the principal boyars, with vestiges of barbarous magnificence. I am in the house of the principal magnate, Prince Brancovan, who (with nine of his relations) was banished by the late tyrant Maurojeni, to the Island of Rhodes. Maurojeni's head has just now been cut off by the Grand Vizier, so that Brancovan may get home again. There is neither chair, table, nor bed belonging to *him* left in this house—that I can answer for; but large *gousty** rooms, and laced sofas. The Grand Vizier himself runs a risk at present of losing his own head, for not having made a stout effort to prevent the Russians from taking Kylia Nova, at the mouth of the Danube, and now investing the fortress of Ismail. Look to your map, my dear Anne, and pity the Vizier, who is ordered (to save his neck) to pass the Danube, at this season of the year, to relieve Ismail!

But now for Sistovo. I shall set out the day after to-morrow, and hope to cross the Danube in a Turkish armed vessel, on the third day. On the 19th instant, all the ministers of the Congress will be assembled there. I hope we shall make speedy and satisfactory work of it. Sistovo is on a hill, the air and water are good. The houses, as I hear, are very small, and inconvenient; my personal habitation is to consist in two of them, joined by a wooden bridge; my servants will be

* *Scotticé*—for "waste" and windy.

in a number of smaller houses around me. Stuart, who is a very excellent lad, shall be lodged in my PALACE, of which you shall hear hereafter, my dear sisters, an admirable description. I am trying to get a draftsman to take faithful sketches of every thing in that strange country. The Turks, who know nothing of the most necessary furniture, have been at an immense expense to furnish our little dwellings. I hear of *velvet* and *gold* sofas, but not of anything for convenience. But all will be *well* if our business goes on prosperously.

The letters travel from Europe most slowly; my latest from England is of the 5th November! Judge of my patience. This country of Wallachia ought to be an absolute garden, and is almost a barren desert, by the sloth and misery of its inhabitants. This town has thirty or forty stone churches, twice as many of wood, fifty palaces, and not one comfortable burgher's house. The streets are paved throughout with *thick* wooden planks, which dance as a coach passes over them.

You would laugh, my dear sisters, to see the slow progression of your brother's cavalcade. Three carriages, with sixteen or eighteen horses, or oxen to each, and five or six peasants at the coach door, to prevent overturns. A guard of hussars before; an officer, in a cart, drawn by four horses, following; and this magnificent *cortège*, after creeping twelve hours, makes two short stages, and dives under ground at night into a damp and dirty Wallachian hut, with bare walls.

But I must have done, as I am writing an immense letter to the office, and an *estafette* will be dispatched to Vienna in an hour or two. Love to all friends. Be of good cheer; I entertain sanguine hopes of a speedy and honourable issue. Lord grant it! for I shall soon tire of Bulgarian grandeur. I embrace the sisterhood, and Aunt Bab, with the warmest affection.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Temeswaer, Nov. 27th, 1790.

My Lord,

Your Grace's dispatch of the 5th November reached me at Buda, and it was matter of great satisfaction to me to learn by it that the differences between our Court and that of Spain were on the point of being terminated in the most honourable manner.* I received at the same time a letter from Mr. Fitzherbert,† dated on the 28th October, acquainting me that the definitive convention had been signed by him and Count Florida Blanca, by which the harmony between the two crowns was established on a secure and permanent basis.

I beg leave to congratulate your Grace and all his Majesty's confidential servants, on an event which adds fresh lustre to the King's reign, and furnishes a most striking proof of the vigour and wisdom of his government. I am willing to hope that the conduct of Spain will be productive of very salutary effects at the Court of Petersburgh, and that the Empress will think it prudent, in the actual situation of things, to renew her propositions of accommodation with the Ottoman Porte, on the principle of the strict *status quo*.

I was disappointed in my expectation of finding letters here from Marquis Lucchesini,‡ and am, therefore, without any very certain intelligence respecting the late operations of the Russians on the Lower Danube. The

* Those regarding the Spanish aggressions on British subjects at Nootka Sound, which national honour justly required and insisted on due reparation; a war was thus averted—"the first shot of which" (says a contemporary), "would have embroiled Europe."

† Afterwards Lord St. Helens, the Ambassador at Madrid, and friend and correspondent of Sir R. M. Keith.

‡ The Prussian Plenipotentiary.

governor of this fortress has assured me that the Russians (after taking the town of Kylia by storm) are advancing, by sea and land, to carry into execution the extensive plans which Prince Potemkin has formed. But in the language which I meet with here, I think I perceive a disposition to overrate the strength of the Russian army, and the military talents of its commander.

The Dutch minister, Baron Haeften, set out from hence yesterday for Orsova, and I shall follow him to-morrow. Our journey has been slow and fatiguing, owing to deep roads and very bad post-horses; but the remaining half of it, which is yet before us, will be infinitely more difficult, as the Austrian and Turkish armies, in the late campaign of 1788, left the roads in a very ruinous state, and the most necessary reparations are hardly yet begun. The Turks laid the whole country waste, and left almost every town and village between this and Orsova in ashes. Nevertheless I shall pursue my journey diligently, though all hurry be wholly unnecessary, as our vessel on the Danube (after a month's navigation) has not reached Orsova, from whence it will require eight or ten days to get to our inhospitable Bulgarian village of Sistovo. We must not think of arriving there before our vessel, as on its lading of household furniture, and every necessary article for housekeeping, our means of subsistence there, with any degree of convenience, must entirely depend.

Baron Herbert is still at Bucharest, and Marquis Lucchesini is probably at the camp of the Grand Vizier. We hear that one of the Turkish plenipotentiaries is already at Sistovo, and the others are soon expected there.

It is with cheerful, as well as active zeal, that I pursue the execution of the important commission with which his Majesty has been graciously pleased to entrust me.

I entertain the sanguine hope of bringing it to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion; and when I shall have attained that object of my ambition, I shall most earnestly request of your Grace's goodness to shorten as much as possible the dreary residence which awaits me in Bulgaria. I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

[*Secret and Confidential.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Bucharest, Dec. 12*th*, 1790.

My Lord,

After the most fatiguing journey that can well be imagined through deep roads, where *sixteen* horses to each carriage could hardly drag it along, I reached this city the night before last, and met with the most polite reception from the Imperial Minister, Baron Herbert, and from the Commander-in-Chief, General Enzenberg.

I was hardly an hour in this place, when the Dutch minister communicated to me the substance of a very interesting conversation which Baron Herbert had brought on with him, the preceding day, in regard to the instructions that minister had received from Vienna, touching the conduct he is to hold at the approaching Congress.

Judging that the same motives which had induced the Austrian minister to speak openly to my Dutch colleagues, would infallibly lead him to broach the same topics to me, and perhaps with a still greater degree of confidence; I furnished Baron Herbert an early opportunity of explaining himself fully, which he eagerly embraced, and the following is the precise result of a long conference, which took place between us at my house yesterday morning.

Baron Herbert began by telling me very frankly, that

he had shown his full powers to the Marquis Lucchesini, and to the Dutch minister, and had seen *theirs;* and that neither those from Berlin, nor from the Hague, were conceived in such terms as to correspond completely with the wishes and expectations of the Court of Vienna. He thought it, therefore, a fair and just proceeding, to compare his full powers with mine, in order to obviate, as soon as possible, every material obstacle which might arise to prevent the conclusion of the definitive treaty, even if all parties should immediately agree in fixing the terms of pacification. He proceeded to explain to me that both in the Prussian and Dutch full powers, the Imperial titles of his sovereign were omitted; which he justly ascribed to the date of those documents being prior to the Emperor's election. This point, he said, would be easily remedied by new full powers being sent to those ministers, before the signature of the treaty. But without the insertion of those titles, he was not at liberty to *conclude anything.**

The second point he owned to be of much greater difficulty; yet he must look upon it as equally a *sine qud non* of his future proceedings; as he had his hands tied up by the express orders of his sovereign, from settling *definitively* any one article of the treaty of peace, without the *avowed guarantee* of the three mediating powers. He alleged that their guarantee of the future treaty had been stipulated at Reichenbach, under the proviso that his *then* Hungarian Majesty should make a formal request of it, at each of the mediating Courts. This very proper step had been taken by the Court of Vienna; and he, Baron Herbert, now laid claim, in the name of his sovereign, to the completion of that engagement on the part of His Britannic Majesty.

* This circumstance, apparently so trifling, amid the consideration of the most weighty affairs, shows the *technical* obstructions to which negotiators are liable.

I immediately replied by expressing my astonishment that the Austrian ministry (who must have remarked that in the ratification given by our Court to the Reichenbach convention, no mention was made of an eventual guarantee,) should now insist so peremptorily on making that guarantee a *previous* step to the formation of a treaty, the contents of which, having now been discussed, could not be foretold.* I added that it gave me pain to find such an unexpected, as well as insurmountable bar thrown in the way of our negotiation; as I could not think of proposing to my Court, what I myself must deem so unreasonable a requisition; the more so, as I had it in positive command to make no promise of guarantee, till the whole articles of the treaty should be brought to maturity, and submitted to his Majesty's consideration; leaving it then to the wisdom of my royal master to determine how it might best become him to act in respect to the guarantee of the whole, or any part of it.

Baron Herbert readily acknowledged the justness of these observations, and pursued the conversation in the following terms: "To require the guarantee of the Court of England to a treaty *undefined*, and even to this hour *unbroached*, would indeed be highly unreasonable. But my Court authorises me to make known to you, Sir, ministerially and solemnly, what the treaty we are about to negotiate *must be*, in its *precise tenor*, before I can put my signature to it. It *must* rest on the single and express basis of the *statu quo* previous to the war, taken in its most strict and rigorous sense; and to *that* your Court will, I dare say, make no scruple to grant its guarantee; as I hereby pledge my word of honour to you, Sir, that at the ensuing Congress I neither shall make to the

* The instructions demanded from his Court by Sir R. M. Keith, prove how completely the pretension (however unfounded) had been foreseen by him.

Turkish plenipotentaries, nor admit on their part, any proposal whatever in addition to, or in deviation from that *sole and rigid principle of pacification*. My confidence in you, Sir," continued Baron Herbert, "goes so far that I will not only give you a copy of my full powers, but *show* you the explicit orders of Prince Kaunitz, which trace out to me the line of conduct I now pursue, and put it wholly out of my power to depart, in any shape, from that strict basis of the *status quo ante bellum*."

He afterwards showed me his full powers, in which he insisted (though not to my entire conviction) that the phrases I have underlined in the inclosed copy of them, laid him under the indispensable obligation of concluding *nothing* without the avowed guarantee of all the mediating powers.

He then desired me to follow with my eye the individual words of a paragraph which he read, of Prince Kaunitz's instructions, which expressly orders him to abide most strictly by the *status quo* previous to the war.

Baron Herbert's language surprised me not a little; I therefore put the question to him if he would consent to adopt as the sole ground of pacification, the phrase made use of by your Grace, in the late instrument of ratification, *Status quo, idem scilicet, id admissum, qui, ante bellum jam nunc instans extitit?*

He replied, without hesitation, "Yes, Sir, and I would sign the peace to-morrow which that phrase defines; with this single additional clause, that the titles of all the treaties which existed between Austria and the Ottoman Porte, previous to the late rupture, shall be *recapitulated in the treaty*; and that each of them shall be declared to remain in full force and *vigour*. This precaution," added he, "is absolutely necessary with the Turks, who believe that all treaties which are not specified in the stipulations of a new treaty of peace,

have been wholly and irrevocably abolished by the intervening war."

"Sir," said I, "the clause you mention appears to me to be liable to two very material objections; the first, that by the mention of so many treaties, you open to the Turks a door to endless discussion of the several articles they contain, and perhaps to some indiscreet claims which those plenipotentiaries may be inclined to set on foot. My second objection is, that if, by the recapitulation of those treaties, you mean to found hereafter a claim to his Majesty's guarantee of their respective stipulations, you aim at what I can hardly conceive will be granted. For how can it be expected that England should become the guarantee of treaties which she had no hand in framing, and several of which she in all probability never saw?"

Monsieur Herbert answered—that if England became the guarantee of the *status quo ante bellum*, she must include the *moral* as well as *physical* state in which the two countries stood with respect to each other at that period, and that the mention of the titles of the aforementioned treaties made no difference in the obligations of the guarantee. But, he added, in order to demonstrate how little apprehension ought to be entertained on that score, he would, in reporting to Prince Kaunitz what had passed in our conference, make it his request to that minister, that complete copies might immediately be sent to London of all those treaties which he himself was directed to mention in the definitive one at Sistova. He promised me, in the meantime, an exact list of those treaties which I send here inclosed.

The conversation ended by my telling him that without presuming to foretell, in any shape, what effect his present declaration would produce in London, I would endeavour to remove, as far as it depended on me, the obstacles which he acknowledged to stand in the way of

a happy termination of the business in which we are engaged. That I should write to your Grace an exact account of all that had passed between us, and beg of him to forward it by estafette. This he promised to do without delay; acquainting me that the Marquis Lucchesini is authorised by his full powers to guarantee *every article* of the treaty; and that Baron Haeften (who has no such authority) had likewise desired him to forward a dispatch to the Hague on the subject.

I send this letter *open* to Lord Auckland, to be forwarded, that his lordship may be fully master of the subject, if he thinks proper to confer with the Grand Pensionary in relation to it.

Marquis Lucchesini is at Sistovo, since the 5th inst., and the three Turkish plenipotentiaries have been there for some weeks. Baron Haeften sets out to-morrow for that place; I shall follow him on Wednesday, and Baron Herbert on Friday; so that on Monday, the 19th, all the members of the Congress will be assembled at Sistovo.

As soon as I shall have conversed with Marquis Lucchesini there, and learned from him what may be expected from the dispositions and views of the Turks, I shall be able to form a judgment in regard to the probable duration and issue of the Congress. Should I be so fortunate as to find the Porte as ready as Austria shows herself, to negotiate on the strict basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, I shall dispatch a messenger to England to receive those commands from his Majesty which (supposing the consent of Prussia and Holland) may enable me to bring the business to a speedy conclusion.

The progress of the Russian arms will probably render the Turks more compliant in our negotiation. Baron Herbert tells me that they are masters not only of Isaacca, Tultzia, and the navigation of the Lower Danube,

but have invested Ismail: which it is thought the Grand Vizier, who has received orders to march on it with his whole force, will find it a very difficult matter to relieve.

I have received (through Vienna) a very kind letter from Sir Robert Ainslie, in which his Excellency, though he had not received accounts of my formal appointment, takes it for granted that I am to be the King's plenipotentiary at the Congress; and adds, that the King's principal dragoman at Constantinople holds himself in readiness to set out to join me on the shortest notice. I shall hope to find him at Sistovo, as my letters, making a similar request, must have reached his Excellency three weeks ago.

R. M. K.

In corroboration (were any necessary) of the foregoing ministerial assurances; as a warrant for Sir R. M. Keith's sanguine expectations of a prompt termination of his mission; as a proof of the personal good will and esteem of the writer for the British envoy; and, above all, as a contrast (which, if not painful, would be ludicrous,) with every feature of the succeeding conduct of the Austrian prime minister, the following private note, which preceded the opening of the Congress, may be given:—

LE PRINCE DE KAUNITZ À MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER KEITH.

A Vienne, ce 15 Decembre, 1790.

Je viens de recevoir la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'écrire de Czernetz; et j'ai l'honneur de vous en remercier, comme d'une attention bien obligeante de votre part. Je suis bien aise que les intentions de l'Empereur aient été exécutées à votre entière satisfaction par Messieurs les Généraux Soro et Hahn; et je

ne doute pas qu' à votre retour, ils ne tâchent de vous être également de toute l'utilité possible. Je souhaite avoir le plaisir de vous revoir bientôt parmi nous; et je m'en flatte, non moins pour *l'amour de vous*, que pour le bien de la chose, attender que le *status quo* que l'Empéreur a bien voulu faire offrir à la Porte par le canal des puissances médiatrices, c'est à dire le retablissement de toutes choses (*nulles exceptées*) rélatives aux deux puissances belligérentes, *rien en deça, et rien en delá*, ne parait exiger que l'extension matérielle de cet engagement réciproque, fidèlement suivie de son éxécution; et que pour cela peu de jours pourront suffire: supposé, comme j'en suis persuadé, que l'on *n'admettra ni chicanes, ni interprétations, à un engagement, lequel loyalement n'en est pas susceptible.* Tâchez de vous maintenir en bonne santé, ainsi que Monsieur le Baron de Haeften, et Monsieur Lucchesini, dont je demande souvent des nouvelles au Baron de Jacobi: et soyez persuadé, je vous prie, du sentimens de parfaite considération, et de *l'ancienne bonne amitié*, avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d' être,

Mon cher Chevalier,

Votre très humble et obéissant serviteur,

KAUNITZ.

The same motives which dictate the insertion of the foregoing note, viz., its *more* than diplomatic inconsistency with the subsequent conduct, on which it reads like a burlesque, have suggested its translation into *plain English.*

PRINCE KAUNITZ TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Vienna, Dec. 15th, 1790.

I HAVE just received the letter you were good enough to write to me from Czernetz, and I have the honour to

return you my thanks for so obliging a mark of attention. I am very glad to think that the Emperor's intentions have been executed to your entire satisfaction by Generals Soro and Hahn, and I doubt not they will equally endeavour on your return to be of all possible use to you. I wish to have the pleasure of seeing you soon again among us, and flatter myself with the hope of it, not less from *my regard for you*, than for the good of the cause; seeing that the *statu quo* which the Emperor has been pleased to offer to the Porte, through the channel of the mediating powers, viz., the re-establishment of all things *without exception*, relative to the two belligerents, neither on *this* side nor *that* of their precise former position, seems to require only the substantive extension of this reciprocal engagement, faithfully followed up by its execution; and that for this purpose a few days ought to suffice, supposing (as I am persuaded) that neither *chicane nor misrepresentations* will be admitted into a compact in *which, honestly carried out, they can find no place.*

I beg you will try and keep yourself in good health, as well as Baron Haeften and Monsieur Lucchesini, about whom I make frequent inquiries of Baron Jacobi; and pray you to be convinced of the sentiments of perfect consideration, as well as of *ancient good fellowship*, with which I have the honour to remain,

My dear Sir Robert,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

KAUNITZ.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, Dec. 23rd, 1790.

I HAVE fairly bid adieu to Christendom since Saturday last, and am now, my dear sisters, an inhabitant of a large Bulgarian *borough,* for town it is not, and village it must not be called, as it contains above five thousand *houses,* such as they are, and a very crowded population. It is situated on the banks of the Danube, on heaven knows how many small hills, with deep chasms between them. The air is excellent, and the water good, so that in point of health it is infinitely preferable to Wallachia.

But let me give you the particulars of my *exit* from that last province, and my *entry* into the Turkish dominions. I must tell you that I slept at a village in Wallachia where there is a large detachment of Austrian cavalry. Notice being sent to the Turks of my intention to cross the Danube, I set out at ten o'clock in the forenoon (the finest mild sunshine I ever saw), and with no less than sixteen (not six) horses to *each* of my three carriages. I was carried at full gallop along a grassy plain, escorted by a detachment of the Austrian cavalry, and all the officers on horseback, together with the chief magistrate of Simniza and his *suite;* in short a most magnificent *cortège.*

I found, on the brink of the Danube, two or three Turkish row-boats armed, and with *pavilions* at their sterns, and cushions to sit on. The mehmandar (an officer appointed to live with me and regulate every thing) was the first to compliment me; then an officer from the tefterdar (treasurer) and other Turks, who took place along with Stuart and me in the first boat, while all the servants and carriages were stowed in the others. My fleet fired their guns (little ragged cannons), three and three, and were answered by an old castle on

the Bulgarian side. The Danube as smooth as glass, and the shore on the Turkish bank lofty and majestic. When we touched the land, a great number of well-dressed Turks met me on horseback, and gave me a fine horse (all over embroidery), which I mounted; other horses were given to Mr. Stuart and *every person* belonging to me. We moved along in slow procession toward the hill; and it was really a striking sight to behold the whole face of it, and of three or four adjacent hillocks, covered with *many many* thousands of people, Turks and Greeks, in strange parti-coloured habits; not one thing or one living creature resembling, in outward appearance, what I had been accustomed to see in Germany.

We were conducted to the *tefterdar's* custom-house, and brought into his apartment, where coffee, pipes, sherbet, sweetmeats, and *frankincense* were presented to us, by turns; and Prince Morusi, chief interpreter to the Porte (a well-conducted young man, son to a hospodar of Moldavia, and who will himself be one day sovereign of that country), made me a very polite compliment in the name of the Reis Effendi, who is the first of my colleagues. From thence we climbed up the hill, on the worst pavement, and through the most crooked lanes that can be imagined (but on sure-footed Turkish horses), and after a hundred turnings and windings, without seeing anything which deserved the name of a street, we at length arrived (and here ends my pompous tale) at my *castle*, allotted to the representative of the Crown of Great Britain.

Figure to yourself, my dear Anne, within a little farmer's yard, where no carriage can turn, a *bit* of a house, containing in all three *pigeon-holes* of rooms, the best of which is fourteen feet by twelve; the dining-room twelve by ten, and six feet in height; the bedchamber just three feet longer and two feet broader than my *tent*

bed, and no other furniture anywhere but large sofas on the floor, with cushions (what say you to that?) of *cut velvet* on a *gold ground!* Never surely were gold and velvet so ridiculously employed!

But let me proceed. This bit of a castle is joined by a wooden bridge and covered passage to another hovel, LESS in every proportion, containing likewise three nutshells called rooms, where my chief attendants reside. I made as if all were entirely to my mind; and, in fact, I care little about the matter. I treated my conductors with coffee, pipes (their own), sherbet, &c., and sent them away contented. I then took a view of my domain, adjoining to my *palace*, and found eleven separate hovels, for my kitchen, for my confectioner, my washerwoman (brought from Bucharest), and a bit of a house for my dragoman Pisani, expected from Constantinople. I immediately set about improving my dwelling, and in four days I have got a new dining-room for *twenty people*, a scullery, confectionary, &c.; chairs, tables, bedsteads, kitchen furniture, and *every article* of housekeeping, *brought from Vienna*, are now in their places, and I, as well as every one of my people, find ourselves pretty comfortable, each in his *pigeon-hole*. I have a guard of Janissaries and Bulgarians, who lodge near my gate, and who accompany me everywhere. All my visits are paid on horseback, with a large retinue, and this forenoon the *Reis Effendi*, and the *Mollah de la Mecque*, and the *Metupscha Bashi*, were crammed together, and smoked their pipes (to repay my visit) in my *best nutshell*.

So much for diplomatic and tedious etiquette; the visits are all finished, and I hope we may be able to set about serious business in two or three days. The Turkish ministers are decent well-behaved men, and very civil in their way. The male Greeks and Turks of this town are a stout and handsome race of people.

The first are clothed in all manner of colours, each man has two pistols and a large poignard at his girdle, and they look arrogant and surly. The Greeks wear long Asiatic habits, but no turban or arms *of any sort*. They would be respectful to us *if they dared*. The Greek women (not handsome, and ill dressed) stared at us as *Christians would do;* but the Turkish women, of whom I saw several hundreds, are dressed uniformly in a large wrapper of chocolate-coloured coarse stuff, which reaches from their chin to their toe, and makes all ages and figures nearly the same. On their heads they have an *impenetrable* veil of white linen, twisted round the head in three or four turns, leaving *no bit of skin* to be seen, but the eyes, and as much of the nose as is sufficient to breathe. These muffled dames sat in little groups, peeping from corners of balconies (every house has a balcony) or through half-opened doors or windows; not one man either in their company or near them. I thought I could perceive some little art in the fashion of the veil; all their eyes appeared lively and of a good colour. But I could not even conjecture where the word *handsome* could justly be applied.

I *did* remark, (and it gave me pleasure to see a little dash of coquetry bestowed upon a Christian) one *fine white plump* female hand, stretched out *bare* on the shoulder of another woman, as if by the *merest accident* in the world! I instantly searched for the eyes to which the hand belonged, and I thought they sparkled with soft complacency. Human nature is the same everywhere!

Now, my dear sisters, what do you not owe me for the preceding *Oriental description*, and all as true as the Gospel? I am a great man everywhere but in my own dwelling; and *there* I am a healthy good-humoured *

* The youthfulness of mind here alluded to by a diplomatist of *sixty*, will probably be held one of the chief charms of his correspondence.

YOUNG fellow, laughing at all inconveniences, and fired with the ambition of doing good to *humanity*, with the full approbation of those who sent me hither. But such an embassy, in the dead of winter, with such roads, weather, and accommodations, to pacify empires in a Bulgarian hut, is not to be met with in history!

This Congress will be dull and slow, but if left to take its own course, I think its issue may be predicted. The Russians are in the height of their campaign on the Danube, but the Reis Effendi told me to-day that the Turks have gained some advantage, and will prevent the fortress of Ismail from falling into the Russian hands. *I am not yet without fear on that score;* but if the Russians are baffled there, the campaign will soon be at an end, and I trust we shall be able to bring the haughty dame of the north to wish for peace.

I have written all this letter without drawing breath; I shall add a few words to-morrow. Young Stuart is an excellent lad, and all my servants behave incomparably well. Adieu! good night, my dear sisters.

24th.

Barely time to tell you, my dear Anne, that all is well; that my dragoman, Pisani (a respectable old gentleman) is arrived from Constantinople with his son, and brings me several presents of wines, fruits, &c., from Sir Robert Ainslie, and a most obliging letter. I am now every way ready for business. My hearty love to all friends, and a most affectionate embrace to the sisterhood and aunt Bab.* You grow lazy as a correspondent, my dear Anne; give me all your news. God bless you.

R. M. K.

* The venerable lady thus repeatedly designated (grand-aunt to the writer), lived in full possession of her faculties, to the age of 100 years and six months.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, Dec. 21*st*, 1790.

My Lord,

The arrival of Baron Herbert on the 19th (Marquis Lucchesini and Baron Haeften having preceded me on the road) has completed the assembly of the Congress; and when the tedious round of visits shall have been finished on all sides—which will still employ five or six days—the business with which we are charged shall be set on foot without delay.

In the hourly expectation of M. Pisani, his Majesty's chief dragoman at the Porte from Constantinople, the Prussian minister has been so obliging as to lend us his dragoman for the present, to assist us in the first visits and compliments of etiquette.

The Reis Effendi is a man in years, of a respectable figure and deportment. The second plenipotentiary (believed to be a favourite at the Porte) is shrewd and inquisitive; but I baffled his indiscreet curiosity by telling him that I should delay to converse with him on business till my interpreter should arrive. The third I shall see to-day, as they pay all their visits together.

[*Cypher.*]

A courier from Berlin has brought to the Prussian minister yesterday the first information of the unhappy misunderstanding which has taken place at the Hague, between the ministers of the three mediating powers and the Imperial ambassador. I hope that the wisdom and approved *loyauté* which distinguish the character of the Emperor, will soon bring back those affairs to the fair and friendly footing on which they stood.

What the Prussian minister has told me of the sentiments of his royal master on that subject, and the steps that monarch has taken at Vienna to procure a satis-

factory explanation relative to the Netherlands, make me almost certain that the progress and issue of our negotiation here will depend in a great measure on the terms in which the Emperor shall reply to the King of Prussia's letter. Your Grace will have the goodness to favour me with immediate directions for my guidance, if the consequence of that unlucky incident, and of Count Mercy's haughty precipitation, should render necessary any alteration in the conduct prescribed to me at this Congress. I have found the Prussian minister exceedingly pressing for the positive promise of the guarantee of England to the future treaty. I have made him remark the great caution with which the King's ratification of the Convention of Reichenbach is expressed, and told him explicitly, that till the contents of the treaty shall be laid before the King, no promise of guarantee can be expected.

On one point I must request your Grace's speedy and precise instructions. The Prussian minister tells me, that in every step of the proceedings here, and in every paper to be signed, he is expressly ordered to insist on a perfect reciprocity with the King of Great Britain. He therefore requires that *every* document shall be made out *double* (as was the case at Teschen between France and Russia), and that the King of Prussia and his Majesty shall have the same alternative in title and signature, as in a common treaty of peace.

Is it his Majesty's pleasure that this demand (the first of the kind that a King of Prussia has ever had an opportunity of making at a Congress) be complied with or rejected?

I think it proper, at this stage of my mission, to acquaint your Grace, that I *cypher* and *decypher all myself*, and that the person who copies the above numbers has not the smallest knowledge of their contents.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, December 28th, 1790.

My Lord,

The hope which the Christian ministers of this Congress entertained of being able to hold the first general meeting of it this day, has been very unexpectedly frustrated by an ill-founded pretension which the Ottoman ministers set up, in regard to places of precedency in the assembly, notwithstanding that they themselves had declared, by letter to Mr. Herbert, at Bucharest, that they very readily agreed to waive, at this Congress, every species of ceremony, or etiquette, which might retard our business.

I will not trouble your Grace with the detail of the idle contestations into which they launched, touching the *form* of a room, and the seats of honour around it. The mediators were unanimously of opinion that the Turkish claims were groundless. But to all the arguments we employed, to bring them over to our opinion, they made but *one* reply; that their *religion* forbade them to comply with our decision. I see some reason to fear that this word *religion* will frequently be brought to serve as a cloak for ignorance or obstinacy.

The Turkish ministers, having the ceremonious circumstances of former treaties much more fresh in their memories than the essential stipulations of those treaties, immediately cited the Congress at Carlowitz; offering to change the oblong square of the actual place of assembly, into an oval form with four doors, &c., &c.

This would have caused a considerable delay in the opening of Congress; we therefore applied once more to the Austrian plenipotentiary, who, with great good temper, and the hearty desire of removing all trifling obstacles, suggested another arrangement of places, viz.: that the Turkish ministers should sit all on one side;

the three mediating plenipotentiaries opposite to them, and he (Baron Herbert) below the *third* of the mediators. By this arrangement, the allied ministers are to be in the centre, having the Imperial ministers on their *right*, and the Ottomans on their *left* hand.

Our Mahometan colleagues have at length agreed to this proposal; and yet our first meeting is still unavoidably postponed till Saturday, the 1st of January. The Turks require that interval of time to prepare the number of copies of their full powers in the Turkish language, (which are in different terms for each of their three plenipotentiaries) and of the Latin translation of them, which must be exchanged at the commencement of the Congress. Such is the pretext they allege; but the real motive of procrastination is to have time for their *astrologers* to calculate, and mark out to them the happy hour for the commencement of the negotiation.

I dare say your Grace will agree with me in thinking that in the deplorable state of the Turkish forces, and when we are ready to restore whole provinces, and strong fortresses to their debilitated empire, the *earliest* hour of acceptance ought, in sound reason, to appear the most eligible. May the negotiation, when once set on foot, proceed with that degree of expedition which the plain sense of the Convention of Reichenbach facilitates to all parties.

I perceive that Marquis Lucchesini thinks himself entitled to unite, in certain cases, the office of mediator with the rights of a contracting party in the above-mentioned convention. This naturally gives him great weight with the Ottoman ministers. But, in as far as I can judge, from what he has told me of the language he holds to them, he has no thought of supporting them in any claim to make alterations in former commercial treaties with the Court of Vienna. He has, at the same

time, declared to me that he will not agree to the insertion of any one article in the treaty of peace, which is not evidently deducible from the Reichenbach Convention.

Baron Herbert, again (as I informed your Grace from Bucharest) has orders to *insist* on the recapitulation and revival of all treaties between Austria and the Porte since the peace of Belgrade. To this I am persuaded that the Prussian minister will not consent.

On the other hand, I question much if Baron Herbert has it in his instructions to agree to make the strict neutrality of his sovereign, during the present war between Russia and the Porte, an express and positive stipulation of the definitive treaty. On these points, it appears to me that the greatest difficulties of the negotiation are likely to rest. Yet I am willing to hope that the general wish for final accommodation will suggest the means of removing them all in a little time.

I write the more freely on all these subjects, and without using cyphers, as this letter goes to Vienna by a Prussian courier, who will deliver it to Mr. Stratton, to be forwarded by a *safe* conveyance. I likewise enclose duplicates of the cyphered part of my two last letters; as this messenger may perhaps outstrip the tardy post which goes from hence to Germany.

As I have found the Ottomans incessantly reverting to the topic of his Majesty's guarantee, and ever expressing their surprise, as well as regret, at my not being authorised to promise them that sanction to the definitive treaty; I have thought it proper to put, at once, an end to all their false reasonings on that head, by desiring them to fix the following political maxim in their minds, that *mediation* and *guarantee* are quite different things; and that neither the one nor the other are ever granted by Great Britain but in consequence of a formal request. That in the Grand Vizier's letter of invitation (of which

I have kept a copy) to Sir Robert Ainslie to assist at the Congress, mention is made of the Porte's request to obtain the King's *mediation*, but not a word is said of his *guarantee*. Consequently (and reserving to my sovereign his undoubted right of refusing such an onerous request *when made*) they themselves are at this moment asking of me an answer to an application which their Court never made to mine, till the subject was brought on the carpet four days ago, in their visit to *me*.

The Grand Vizier, (who appears to be an ignorant and presumptuous man) sent a few days ago, through the Reis Effendi, some very petulant questions to the Prussian minister here, implying a reproach of lukewarmness in the King of Prussia's not having already declared war against Russia.

Monsieur de Lucchesini showed me his answer, which was strong and indignant, as it ought to be. He told the Grand Vizier that his master had an army of above sixty thousand men, ready on the frontiers of the Russian dominions, to enforce the just terms of pacification which he had proposed to the Czarina; while he (the Grand Vizier) has not twenty thousand men now collected, to oppose the most dangerous attack actually carried on by the Russian general within a few days of his (the Grand Vizier's) head-quarters. The Prussian minister exhorted his Highness to make the most vigorous efforts to save Ismail; and to rest assured that the allies of the Porte would, at all times, show themselves equally faithful to their engagements, and active in their exertions. He repeated that his Prussian Majesty left the Porte at liberty to conclude a separate peace with Russia; but not otherwise than in strict conformity to the basis of the *status quo*.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistova, Dec. 30th, 1790.

My Lord,

The Turkish *astrologers* having discovered that one o'clock yesterday was a fortunate hour for opening the Congress, the Ottoman ministers made known to the mediators that they wished to meet us at that hour.

To this proposal we assented with great pleasure. But a sudden change of opinion in the mind of the Imperial Internuncio had like to have thrown us into a new perplexity and delay. He had repented of what *he himself* had suggested, and to which all parties had agreed, touching the arrangement of places in the Chamber of the Assembly. He applied to the mediating ministers to have their advice, in order to find out and determine a *third* mode of arrangement; giving us to understand that he must retract his former proposal, and might, perhaps, be forced to write to Vienna for orders.

We told him that it would be matter of great concern to our Courts to see the opening of the Congress postponed to so distant a period. But that, as we had acquainted them with our acceptance of his proposition, and had, at the same time, given due praise to his accommodating disposition, we must leave on him the blame of procrastination, and the choice of the measures which he thought it became him to pursue. After a few hours' reflection, the Imperial Internuncio gave us notice that he would meet us at the Congress, at the appointed hour.

It fortunately occurred to me, that as Baron Herbert was determined to proceed to business, there might be a way of giving to the place he was to occupy in the room, a greater degree of *distinction* than had been

at first thought of. I therefore proposed to Messrs. Lucchesini and Haeften, that, by *reversing* the order of the places of the *mediating* ministers, and sitting *myself* next to Baron Herbert, whilst Monsieur de Haeften should be placed exactly opposite to the Reis Effendi, there would remain no doubt of the Emperor's minister being in possession of the most honourable place which could be devised; whilst the mediators preserved their right of being in the middle between the contracting parties.

To this plan my colleagues in the mediation gave their full approbation; and Baron Herbert has since expressed his complete satisfaction with the expedient I had suggested. I should not have troubled your grace with all these minute details, if the contracting parties had not thought them of *great* importance.*

I thought it the province of the King's minister to open the Congress. I did so, in the few phrases in the French language, of which I send a copy inclosed. They were translated into Turkish, and read to the Ottomans by the Dragoman of the Porte.

Speech of his Britannic Majesty's minister on opening the Congress, inclosed in the above:—

"Messieurs les Plénipotentiaires des Puissances contractantes, les ministres des cours médiatrices vous félicitent, par ma bouche, de l'ouverture de ce Congrès, auquel vos souverains respectifs ont formellement invité les notres, pour compléter l'ouvrage de la paix, dont les fondemens ont été heureusement jettés à Reichenbach en Silésie.

"Nous sentons combien il est honorable pour nous d'avoir été choisis par nos cours, pour y mettre la dernière main.

* The gravity with which official decorum obliges Sir R. M. Keith to narrate them, would only heighten his sense of their ludicrous insignificance.

"Nous sommes trés convaincus, Messieurs, que conformément aux intentions bienfaisantes de vos Illustres Souverains, vous portez dans cette assemblée, la droiture parfaite, et la véritable esprit de conciliation.

"Vous êtes en droit d'attendre, et j'ose vous assurer, Messieurs, que vous trouverez de notre part, toute la bonne foi, et toute l'impartialité qui doivent constamment accompagner les fonctions respectables dont nos souverains nous ont chargés.

"Puisse la paix qui doit couronner nos travaux communs, rétablir la bonne harmonie entre les deux Empires limitrophes, sur les bases les plus solides, et les plus inaltérables!"

It was the work of three hours to read the originals of all the different full powers, with their translations from Turkish into Latin, and from Latin to Turkish, and occupied almost the whole remaining time of the meeting. I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

Extracts from such portions of Sir R. M. Keith's dispatches as are essential for the objects and progress of the negotiation.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, January 4th.

My Lord,

All preliminary forms being now adjusted, the real business of the Congress was entered upon in the following manner. The Austrian minister read aloud, in French, a speech of some length (which was immediately translated into Turkish by the united efforts of the dragoman of the Porte, and an Austrian interpreter,) and in that form read to the minister of the Sultan.

Your Grace will find annexed an exact copy of Baron Herbert's speech, containing no mention *whatever* of

the Reichenbach Convention, but establishing the Emperor's *ultimatum* on the strict basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, and rendering the recapitulation and confirmation of all treaties between the two empires, previous to the war, a *sine quâ non* of the definitive treaty. To these overtures the Turks, after a short consultation among themselves, replied by the enclosed minute, of which I transmit an exact copy as delivered to Baron Herbert in *Turkish and French*, by the dragoman, with all the inaccuracies of the latter *idiom*, which he is to correct at leisure. The principal scope of this paper is to fix the basis of the treaty on the articles of the Convention of Reichenbach, and of the subsequent convention of armistice between the Grand Vizier and the Marshal de Saxe Cobourg. Baron Herbert received this paper as a preliminary proposition of negotiation, and promised to deliver an answer to it at the next meeting.

[*Cypher.*]

It appears to me that Baron Herbert (or, more properly Prince Kaunitz), has judged very *ill* in avoiding all mention of the Reichenbach Convention in the propositions now laid before the Congress. The words *sine quâ non*, and *ultimatum*, are likewise very peremptorily employed at the very *outset* by him, in presence of three mediators whose sovereigns are requested to guarantee the definitive treaty, and who, in all probability, will not extend that guarantee to any commercial treaties, and consequently will take no share in the *sine quâ non*.

The Prussian minister declares to me positively that his Court will not admit of the recapitulation of those treaties in the definitive one; while the request made to me at parting, last night, by Baron Herbert, was to assure my Court that he would not depart a *hair's breadth* from the propositions he had made to the Turkish ministers on Sunday.

In the preceding part of the evening he had shown me a long account (sent to him from Bucharest) of the Russians having taken the important fortress of Ismail, by storm, on the 22nd of December. The loss on the side of the Russians is said to exceed four thousand killed, and of the Turks, more than double that number were slain. Should the fortress of Brailow, which is the next object of attack, fall into the Russian hands, it would reduce the Congress at *Sistovo* to the very precarious condition I mentioned to your Grace, in my letter of 14th November, from Vienna.

Sistovo, January 7th.

In the conference of Wednesday last, Baron Herbert produced a written answer to the paper delivered to him on the 2nd, by the Ottoman ministers, and began to read it by distinct paragraphs, each being immediately translated into Turkish.

He soon perceived that the Ottomans became uneasy from the moment that he had made mention of his unreserved admission of the stipulations of Reichenbach, and of the strict *status quo*, as the foundation of the whole negotiation. The Ottomans pressed very hard, and by redoubled instances, to have *their* papers accepted, as the basis of treaty, and (*to our astonishment,*) they gave us clearly to understand that the Porte not having been a party in the above-mentioned convention, *they* meant to ground the treaty *solely* on the *armistice* concluded between the Grand Vizier and the Marshal de Saxe Cobourg.

It was in vain that the mediating ministers represented to them with the *utmost calmness,* that their right and powers of intervention *here,* arose solely from the engagements contracted at Reichenbach; and that *we* had unanimously determined to bring back the Imperial minister to that convention, which he had

omitted to mention in his first proposals. Baron Herbert took this opportunity of declaring that he had corrected his former inadvertence, in the most explicit terms. The Ottomans persisted in substituting *their* convention of armistice; and soon after retired to their separate rooms to discuss the matter among themselves.

In a little time they sent the dragoman of the Porte, to request a conference with the three mediators.

We joined them in their chamber, and (giving them unwearied attention) we passed two hours and a half in combating the most singular arguments that ever were alleged, which they strove to maintain after a tenfold refutation.

The whole secret of this untenable proposition, was to get rid of the phrase *status quo*, which happens not to be included in the instrument of armistice, and which they *pretended* not to understand. The Ottoman ministers comprehended us perfectly; but gave up nothing.

It appeared but too plainly, that as they negotiate under the terror of a despotic monarch, and an ignorant and harsh Grand Vizier, they think themselves bound to stand unshaken, on the worst ground possible, for a certain number of days. Their sole object is to convince their two masters that the full measure of obstinacy has been completed; and that the responsibility of accepting the fatal phrase *status quo*, and all its inevitable consequences, in regard to former treaties with the Court of Vienna, must be removed from off their shoulders, by orders from their superiors.

The only result of our conferences with the Turkish ministers was their declaring their determination to debate the treaty article by article; and at the same time their admission of the Convention of Reichenbach. This last *essential* circumstance having been inserted in the *protocol* of the conference, the meeting broke up, as the day was far advanced.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, January 6th, 1791.

"*Abilai Kol tesh,*" means in the Turkish language, "I wish you a happy New Year;" and "*Bran fum grit*" is the phrase by which *we* Bulgarians express, "and many happy years to come."

I am sure, my dear sisters, it would give you great delight to receive a whole letter from me in *either* of those languages, which I have completely acquired; but I have not time to display my learning to-day, and I therefore hasten to assure you that I am (I *must* indulge you by giving you that pretty expression in Turkish) "*Miru zil pazu,*"—that is to say, as well as a *trout* in a clear stream; and so is my comrade Stuart, (a very amiable lad) and all my servants, and Janissaries, and Bulgarians, all *trouts,* every mother's son of them!

But as to the Turkish plenipotentiaries, their liveliness is that of an oyster, whose progressive pace is *certain,* though hardly discernible.

Ismet Bey, Mollah de la Mecque, my *second* Ottoman colleague, is reckoned a bit of a wag, and indeed he speaks his mother tongue with great volubility; decorating every phrase with the accompaniment of a whiff of tobacco; but I think it savours a little of his theological education, and I soon *smoked* him to be one of the *Ulema,* or doctors of the college of civil law. The Reis Effendi, Abdallah, is an honest quiet gentleman, who knows more than he chooses to tell; because, (between you and me) he stands a little in awe of his inferior, that same Mollah de la Mecque, who is shrewdly suspected of being a favourite *behind the curtain.* As to "*Durri Renuve Evvel,*" my third comrade, he is reckoned monstrously deep, and I daresay he is; for

since we have drawn him at the Congress, we have got but one little bucket of eloquence *up*—but it was strong, clear, and *tasty*. Judge, my dear Anne. "*Rezub delo guralnu,*" "lay a little wood on the fire"—which my diplomatic sagacity interpreted to signify "Speak up to him,"—"Give him the argument *piping hot*, but do it courteously."

What a charm it is for you, my dear sisters, to have a brother, sitting on a Bulgarian hill, and cross-legged on a gold cushion, to investigate in this sapient manner, the deepest *arcana of state;* in the very bosom of Mussulman faith, and Saracen profundity! I could pass my life in this colloquial gaiety, and interchange of illumination, if it were not that my dwelling is too narrow for my fat carcase; and that our Excellencies are frequently in want of *white bread*, and carrots, and turnips, which I love exceedingly. We bring the bread from Wallachia, and the garden stuff from Transylvania, an *hundred leagues off*, which is rather troublesome!

But I have not told you, my dear Anne, why I write you this hasty scrawl one post sooner than I intended. Why, because I have the mortification of knowing that one of my best lucubrations, written to the sisterhood from Czernetz in Wallachia, on the 2nd of December, has been employed to light some Austrian corporal's pipe—as it never reached Stratton at Vienna. My second motive arises from *your* epistle to Stratton having been sent to *me* here, by mistake, and my having taken the liberty to peruse it. Now, as you seem to give me little credit for punctuality (though I have written you *six* letters since the 16th of November), I am happy to answer that epistle in Stratton's place, till I send it back to him; when your correspondence may be pursued with vigour.

You would scold me if I wrote from Turkey without

giving you the sequel of my observations upon the Turkish women. I have now seen some of these dear creatures every day for these three weeks, and as they are all similarly clothed in long black gowns, and all veiled in an uniform manner, I have attained to great perfection in judging of their *beauty;* by the same exact rule that a Scotch servant lass judges of the value of a *sack of coals*—viz.: whether it be crammed, or "*maggit.*"* They have yellow boots on; that I have discovered by one of those Incognitas falling into the kennel t'other day, very obligingly, and by the contraction (involuntary of course) of her right heel, she did me the favour of showing me one inch of a yellow boot. If I could have seen her face, through veil and mud, I am sure it was crimsoned with blushes. I turned aside with a *modest urbanity;* and I have the comfort of thinking that neither my Mehmandar, nor Janissaries, nor that Christian infidel Stuart (who surrounded me), saw the shame of that sweet Mahometan—*coal-sack!*

But I must have done, and hasten to debate a point of geography; to ascertain, with my chum the *Mollah,* the limits of certain provinces of the Ottoman empire. He is a bright luminary in geography, for he asked me t'other day (this literally true), and in presence of all his colleagues—"If Spain is not in Africa?"

"*Binko-puz-myzandra:*" love to all cronies; and cordial affection to the sisterhood. Heaven guard you all. My next shall be in modern Greek, which I begin to chatter very prettily.

* A cant Edinburgh expression, for one that had been pilfered from in the carriage.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistovo, Jan. 17*th*, 1790.

I HAVE now passed a month at Sistovo, my dear Anne, in most *perfect health*, and so has every Christian belonging to the four missions. This will prove to you, my dear sisters, what a healthful climate this is. The situation is as fine as can be imagined, and the town (scattered on the side of three or four small hills, and overlooking the noble Danube) would make one of the finest pictures possible. But, alas! I can find no painter capable of drawing such a landscape,* though I have ransacked all Bucharest for such an one. My confectioner has made a faithful though *coarse* drawing of my dwelling-house, and all its adjacent hovels. He shall do the same of the ministers' houses, and the sight of them, and their description, will amuse us all in a winter's evening.†

The four missions of Christians live very amicably and hospitably together. I beat them all *hollow* in point of table, wines, and confectionery. I have twice as many servants as any other minister, and my people are active and clever in their professions. We have no intercourse with our Mussulman colleagues but at the conferences, when they always treat us with coffee, sweetmeats, &c. They lead a sad dull life among themselves.

As to the inhabitants of Sistovo, we meet them in the street, and see them sitting at their shops; they take no more notice of us than of so many stones. They sometimes mutter between their teeth *Giaour* (which signifies dog), but none of them dares to be any way rude. The Greeks bow respectfully to us, and put their hands to

* One was ultimately found, for a picture fully answering the above description is preserved in Sir R. M. Keith's family.

† These sketches are likewise extant.

their hearts; but all in private, and silently, for fear of their Turkish tyrants. The Prussian minister was coming to my house yesterday with all his guards and servants. A little Turkish girl, of eight or nine years old, stepped from her mother's side to have the pleasure of calling his excellency *Giaour* to his face, and aloud. The Janissaries reproved Miss for her indiscreet zeal; the minister only laughed, as you may believe. I mention this to show what blind prejudice in religion will do. The Turks (who are beaten everywhere) literally believe themselves to be of a class of beings infinitely superior to Christians!

I told you in my last, my dear Anne, about the Turkish women. I have not a word to add; for more than one fist of female flesh belonging to Mahomet, saw I never. My chum Stuart met two ladies with their attendants t'other day; their ladyships were up to the chin in yellow bags, instead of black, that was all the difference!

We have a Pasha of two tails here for the police of the town; he is an Albanian, a stout-looking determined blade. He does his business well; we hear of no quarrels. The Austrian prisoners are now returning home; eighteen officers, and between six and seven hundred men are the whole. They are exchanged at Ruschuk, about thirty English miles from hence.

You now expect, my dear sisters, that I should give you some notion of the progress of our business. It has been at a stand these eight days; the Turks waiting for fresh orders from Constantinople. They all know that they have but *one* plain path to pursue; yet it is hard work with these obstinate people to make them take the first essential step in it, though manifestly for their *own good.* They are now in labour of one *sensible proposition;* we mediators are good midwives; we will bring it safe into the world in a few days, and then all

the rest will be smooth turf to our journey's end. I hope to send my definitive messenger to England before Sunday next; and at his return I shall be relieved from this singular exile. The Turks (according to custom) make a handsome allowance to every minister who negotiates in their country. This will do more than defray my expenses here, but I have not the smallest desire to prolong the enjoyment of their subsidy; and I promise you I shall *run away* from it, the instant I can do so with propriety. I hope, my dear sisters, to make this singular and outlandish job of work, a very satisfactory one to all parties. I will maintain my just claim to the hearty approbation of all my superiors, and from *that* only do I look for a reward. Diamond boxes, and Turkish piastres have less hold on me than perhaps on any other man; my *native* and *hereditary* poverty is my *pride*. How I shall rejoice when I get back again to old Vienna!

Our *only* lady, Madame Herbert, is gone to Bucharest for a few weeks to see her children. A sad loss to us; not that she is superabundantly attractive, but that we now live and dine together like monks in a refectory. A female cheek is a thing we shall not see till Madame Herbert returns to us. All my Vienna friends, young and old, are well, and bid us hasten back to them. Lord Elgin is much liked; I hear his manners and talents much commended. Arbuthnot wrote to me that he would be in Paris in February.

My Bulgarian newsmongers predict *sad mischief* in France in a little time. That nation must pass through the FIERY FURNACE to be purified back to its original standard. Adieu my trusty friend,

Yours in every sense,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, January 11th, 1791.

I AM sorry to acquaint your Grace that the meeting of Congress, yesterday, proved by no means satisfactory, as the Ottoman ministers persisted (whether for the purpose of giving time for first instructions, or from Mahometan pertinacity) in refusing to make a formal avowal of their general acceptance of the phrase *status quo;* though they did not seem inclined to run the risk of entirely rejecting it, a risk of which the fatal and inevitable consequences had been frequently held up to them by the mediators.

They began the conference by asking the Austrian minister in what manner he thought himself entitled to extend the meaning and application of the term, beyond the specific stipulations of the Reichenbach Convention? Baron Herbert gave them a distinct answer, by saying that as he had, in his sovereign's name, solemnly engaged to fulfil every article which was for the advantage of the Ottoman Porte, he had, at the same time, established the Emperor's right to the full completion of the *status quo* on their side towards him.

They then, and perhaps with the hope of being able to vary the ground of litigation, addressed me to know my definition of *status quo.* I answered that the definition given by Marquis Lucchesini in a preceding conference, contained the sentiments of all the mediators. That Baron Haeften and I had already, both of us, confirmed it, and that it was losing time to put questions which had already been explicitly answered. They then asked me if the triple mediation had not been requested in order to establish a permanent peace.

To this I answered that I could not suppose the Ottoman ministers had sufficiently reflected on the

nature of such an interrogation; or that they could possibly address it to the ministers of three such respectable Courts. That as they had seen my full powers, and heard my address to all parties, at the opening of the Congress, they must suppress a question which required and deserved no answer. Each of my colleagues in the mediation, said a few words to the same effect.

The Ottomans now attempted to enter into a wide field of discussion, by asking Baron Herbert what was his definition of the word *peace*? He replied that he came here to make the peace of *Sistovo*, and not to launch out into a dissertation on general terms which all parties understood alike. The Turkish ministers (after a little deliberation) said they must retire into their own chamber, where we joined them soon after with a firm determination to speak in a very plain, though temperate manner, to these ministers, and to bring them to listen to reason, and to acknowledge the obligations of the convention which it was impossible for them to elude. They again reverted to their futile arguments respecting the convention of armistice; but we cut the matter short by showing them their own words, by which they acknowledge, in that identical paper, "que la convention de Reichenbach est *approuvée et acceptée par la Sublime Porte.*"

They had no longer one foot of solid ground to stand upon, yet they would not recede. We then concerted with Marquis Lucchesini, that he should speak openly to them as the representative of a contracting party at *Reichenbach*, and of a monarch to whom the Turks owed the manifold and most important advantages which had already accrued to their empire by the cessation of hostilities, and the recovery of very extensive territories, which were now to be confirmed to the Porte by the peace.

The Prussian minister did this in a very strong

manner; representing not only the great benefits which the King, his master, and his allies, had already procured for them, but recommending to the Ottomans to set a *proper value* on such services, and to reflect on the imminent danger of releasing the Court of Vienna from the engagements contracted at Reichenbach, by an obstinate rejection of that half of the *status quo*, to which the Imperial minister had very justly laid claim. To this language they did not attempt to offer a reply. But being still unwilling to pronounce an acquiescence in its justice, they changed their ground, and asked if we would not enter into a *revision* of each of the treaties which Baron Herbert was so desirous to have confirmed by the Porte.

[This proposal having (on the grounds already stated, of ignorance of their tenor on the part of Britain, and positive refusal to guarantee them on the part of Prussia) been decidedly negatived, Sir R. Keith goes on to mention a possible cause of misunderstanding among his *civilized* colleagues.—ED.]

I am now to give your Grace an account of what has been communicated to me by the Prussian minister, which will probably throw some light on the question put to us by the Turks toward the close of our conference with them. On the 8th instant (after the breaking up of the Congress) Baron Herbert said to him *alone*, that he had paid particular attention to the last phrase of *his* definition of *status quo*, and knew to what he alluded in saying, there might be something in the Imperial treaties with the Porte, which would, *perhaps*, prove contradictory to the sense of the Reichenbach Convention. He then read to the Marquis, and gave him in writing the 4th article of a Turkish *Sened* (of which I send your Grace a copy), begging that minister if it should, in his judgment, seem repugnant to the stability of peace, to make no direct opposition to it

here, but leave the point to be amicably adjusted afterwards by their respective Courts. The Marquis said in return, that the article Baron H. had now put into his hand was entirely *new* to him. That it had struck him at first sight as being an unprecedented establishment of a *right of reprisals by the sword*, and at the will of the Court of Vienna; which right, if left to subsist, would annul all the duties and functions of a guarantee. He therefore would not promise not to deliver in the Congress an opinion to that effect, if the Ottomans should ever address him on the subject. Being willing, however, to obviate the most distant cause of misunderstanding, he would immediately refer the matter to the determination of his sovereign.

As this affair has been thus imparted to me, and will probably become matter of *very serious discussion*, I think it my indispensable duty to lay it fully before your Grace; making it my earnest request to be favoured with early and explicit instructions for my guidance, in relation to what I fear may prove a stumbling-block in the way of the object I have it so ardently at heart to promote.

R. M. K.

LORD AUCKLAND * TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

MY DEAR SIR, *Hague, Jan. 11th*, 1791.

I have received yours from Temeswaer, giving an account of what passed between you and Monsieur Herbert; and the ministers in England will draw auspicious conclusions from it as to your approaching negotiation at Sistovo. I have not yet seen any communication of the treatics which we are expected to guarantee, either to England or to this Republic.

* His Majesty's Plenipotentiary at the Hague, through whom the dispatches passed.

That point, and the questions dependent on it, may occasion some little delay; but I am sure that you may rely on the dispatch of the King's ministers,* and that not an hour will be lost on their part towards enabling you to bring your important undertaking to the most immediate conclusion. They cannot wish to bury your talents in Sistovo, one hour longer than is necessary. And yet I think I see, through the cloud of impending circumstances, some matters which may protract the negotiation longer than will be quite agreeable to you.

Is it impossible to take some precaution for the security of the province of Wallachia, upon its being evacuated by the Austrian troops, in the event of the Russian war continuing? Every possible exertion is using to bring that war also to a conclusion, upon the principle of the strict *status quo.*

This same Russian story is the only one which now materially occupies us; because the business of Sistovo being in such *good hands for all parties,* is *considered as settled.* Great activity is exciting, and will be excited, as to the other; and the justice of our object, as well as its wisdom is such, that I have great hopes as to the final result.

Other powers are also disposed to support the disinterested principle on which we act; and I am not without hopes that the Emperor will feel that this is an occasion on which he may fix and rivet the honourable friendship of England, and also the establishment of a long, complete, and general pacification.

It is with great concern for your personal comforts that I address this to you at Sistovo, where I suspect your accommodations are not much better than those of a village in the interior of Africa. But, with all

* In whose confidence, the writer then stood uncommonly high.

possible good wishes for your speedy deliverance from a campaign (the *désagrémens* of which, however, will be compensated by its *laurels*) I must here conclude; and you will forgive my writing so illegibly when I add, that I have ONLY had four couriers from England in the last twenty-four hours!

Believe me ever, my dear Sir,
Most sincerely and faithfully yours,
AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, January 25th, 1790.

MY LORD,

I am heartily sorry to be obliged to acquaint your Grace, that to this hour, the most earnest representations of the mediating ministers, enforced by the pressing remonstrances of the plenipotentiary of Prussia, (the only ally of this empire,) have not got the better of that spirit of procrastination which our Turkish colleagues have betrayed ever since the opening of the Congress.

I had the honour to inform your Grace by last post, that they had positively fixed Monday the 24th for the renewal of the conferences. The Reis Effendi had been slightly indisposed with a cold in the end of last week, but not in such a manner as to prevent his meeting us on the day appointed.

It was therefore matter of surprise and regret to us, to receive intimation from that minister yesterday morning, (an hour before the Congress should have met) that his indisposition was augmented, and that he was sorry he could not pursue the negotiation till to-morrow, the 26th. We immediately concluded this to be a flimsy pretext, and the delay a new tergiversation on the part of the Turks. But having discovered that

a Tartar courier had arrived from Constantinople early in the morning of yesterday, we were indulgent enough to suppose that, perhaps, they had received new and decisive instructions; and that, as the tenor of them must alter their language and manners, they required some time to study their parts. We conjectured that the Ottomans would employ all their art in gradually relinquishing their untenable ground, and yielding to reason, without appearing to sacrifice any part of that *supposed dignity* which they affect to maintain in everything; but which, (in the opinion of every sensible man,) lends but a very thin cloak to ignorance and obstinacy. We had been too kind to them in seeking to discover even a tolerable apology for their conduct. Our dragoman went to the Reis Effendi this morning to inquire after his *health*, and to mention our firm reliance on his promise to hold a conference *to-morrow*. He gave for answer that he was not yet in a state of health to think of meeting us to-morrow; but that he hoped to have that satisfaction on Thursday next. Even this last intimation was not given in a tone of fixed resolution. I wrote this morning to Marquis Lucchesini (the mediating ministers having come to an agreement yesterday not to allow the Turks to *shuffle* any longer,) to express to him my indignant feelings at such behaviour. He shares them with me, and immediately sent his dragoman to the Reis Effendi, to *insist* upon a meeting. That minister (who has in fact been indisposed, though not to that degree as to justify his conduct towards the mediators) has promised to meet us on *Thursday*. If he should not, your Grace may be assured that the three mediating ministers will, without further delay, make a *joint and formal* remonstrance to the Ottomans, in terms becoming the real dignity of the sovereigns they have the honour to serve.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistovo, January 24th, 1790.

I AM sending a messenger to England, my dear Anne, and though I have professional scribbling on my hands more than I can set my face to—he shall carry the sisterhood a few cordial lines, with the assurances of my perfect health, and great anxiety to hasten the conclusion of this tiresome business. If Mahomet has commanded his sectaries to be more obstinate than *mules*, he is obeyed to the letter of his law! These bearded negotiators have been quibbling for these five weeks, like Old Bailey solicitors. They have a zig-zag kind of logic, which it plagues common sense to be obliged to *sweep away* from all its creeks and corners; but I think we have got their worships now so completely at a *non-plus*, that in the conference to which I am just now going, they must condescend (like coy damsels) to accept of a thousand advantages which we have been thrusting into their bosoms ever since we came to Sistovo.

There is a fatality attends this un-Christian congress! Every wheel of it stops by turns. The Reis Effendi has sent to tell us that an *indisposition* prevents him from meeting us in Congress until Wednesday. I know he has had a cold, but this has much the air of a sham paroxysm. I am certain they received this morning fresh orders by a Tartar courier from Constantinople. I trust that they are now studying a more *rational* part they have to act; but with these deep negotiators *reason* is as yet *hors de combat*. Well! if that be their motive for procrastination, I will forgive them, for this last time. I must delay my messenger till Friday, but not longer. Adieu then for a day or two, my dear Anne. This letter *shall* go with the messenger; it will travel both

more surely and expeditiously. I embrace the sisterhood and aunt Bab most kindly.

January 28.

The Turks swallowed yesterday (*par miracle,*) a large bolus of common sense and prudence, which we mediators prescribed to them; nay, even in a manner thrust down their throats. They made horrid wry faces, but no matter; it will do them and theirs a world of good. My messenger will gallop away to-morrow morning, and on his return I trust that I shall be soon un-Mussulmanised, and sent back to fatten amongst the honest Germans. I have not, my dear Anne, a finger to write with; they are all worn down to the size of thumbs by incessant scribbling. But I am well, hearty, and heartily tired of Turkish coffee, Turkish conversation, tobacco, rose water, and frankincense. *Nota Bene,* I am, by conviction, a *better Christian* than ever. God bless you all.

R. M. K.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS BY THE MESSENGER LAUZUN.

Sistovo, Jan. 28*th.*

My Lord,

The conference was opened yesterday morning, by Baron Herbert's reading to the assembly a notification of the Emperor's having appointed Count Francis Esterhazy his second *Imperial* plenipotentary at this Congress. That gentleman is supposed to be on the road from Vienna, but it is declared that the prosecution of the negotiation is to suffer no *delay* in consequence.

The Turkish plenipotentaries had come down to the Congress at a late hour; having, as we afterwards learned, spent the forenoon in determining the precise measure of the condescending step they would vouchsafe to make without humbling themselves so far as to meet

their adverse party on level ground. This appeared by a written proposition which the Reis Effendi prefaced by many futile professions of a conciliatory disposition on the part of the Sublime Porte. He then read his paper containing an offer of *conditional acceptance* of the *status quo*, provided that other points should be *previously* adjusted to the satisfaction of the Porte.

[Here follow stipulations of a private nature between Turkey and Austria, not comprehended in the proposed treaty, and consequently not legitimate subjects of litigation, pending its discussion, and as such again repudiated by the Austrian plenipotentary.—ED.]

The Turks tried, during more than an hour, to turn and twist their *conditional* proposal into every possible shape short of the plain adoption of the basis held out to them. They called their *demands*, wishes, desires, suggestions, &c., and at each time that the mediators urged the necessity of beginning, by fixing the *foundation* stone of our building, before they attempted to rear a superstructure—the Ottomans constantly drew back, and said they wondered that having done *so much*, and shown every sort of facility, more could be required of them till their very reasonable wishes were gratified.

Baron Herbert in return (for he, too, delights in a parade of words) boasted of his *tractability* and *pliability* whenever he had an inch of liberty left him. He, however, read a written paper, proving that he was deprived of all discretionary power whatever.

The mediators, being heartily tired of turning round in the same mill for five long weeks, I adddressed those ministers who had shown themselves such great proficients in the complimentary art. I told them, in the name of the three mediators, that I congratulated both the contracting parties on what *they termed* their reciprocal complaisance; though *we* could hitherto perceive no visible effect of that accommodating spirit. That we

conceived it to be high time for the principal parties to reflect on what was *due* to so respectable a mediation, and to set us in possession of the full exercise of our functions, by a mutual and unreserved acceptance of the basis of the *status quo*, as settled at *Reichenbach*. That in virtue of that sole act the mediating ministers had been sent to Sistovo, and that having that rule to walk by, they could take no share in any proposition distant a hair's breadth from it on one side or the other. The Turks, though pressed so hard (Marquis Lucchesini and the Dutch minister confirming what I had said in terms of equal import and energy), were still resolved not to give way; and after cavilling for half an hour longer, hinted that they wished to put off the sequel of this debate till another conference. But seeing that all three ministers were ready to protest against such a palpable and unjustifiable procrastination, they changed their purpose, and told us they must withdraw into their private chamber to say their prayers.

The mediators (after their departure) told the Imperial minister that they must likewise hold a conference in their separate apartment. Marquis Lucchesini, Baron Haeften, and I, had determined (on the preceding day) to support the dignity of our sovereigns by making *an absolute stand* at this stage of the business, and forcing the Turks to declare, before they left the house, whether they would expressly accept, or definitively reject the principle of the strict *status quo*. We had drawn up two remonstrances to that effect, one (the most stringent) giving notice that the intervention of the mediating powers must remain *suspended*, in case a milder but equally cogent proposal should fail of its effect. These measures, on our part, were kept in reserve for the last extremity, and happily we were not driven to that extremity. It would be giving your lordship much unnecessary trouble to recapitulate all the subterfuges

to which the Turks had recourse, in several messages sent to us (the mediators) by their principal dragoman. We remained unshaken in our declared purpose of *requiring* a satisfactory explanation. They then proposed to have another conference in four days after, and held out hopes of their probable acquiescence. This being refused, they sent to tell us that the heavenly constellations were in adverse aspect, and they must not proceed under such a danger. This motive being treated with the derision it deserved, their principal dragoman was employed no more as their messenger, but they had recourse to our interpreter, and through him, they varied their insinuations again and again.

At length, my lord, after carrying on their fruitless attempts for almost two hours, and always receiving from us the same firm requisition of an explicit answer, they desired us to return to our chamber of general assembly, where they joined us. There, with much reluctance, but in plain unequivocal terms, they at length pronounced that irrevocable acceptance of the *status quo, strict* and *unreserved,* of which your Grace will find the precise terms in the annexed copy extracted from the protocol of Congress.

After this, we wished them joy of their having taken possession of safe and honourable ground. At their request an end was put to the conference, and Monday, the 31st, was appointed for our next meeting.

Thus, my lord, we flatter ourselves that all essential obstacles are removed, and that we shall be able to proceed with a competent degree of expedition in settling every article of the definitive treaty.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

[*By the same messenger Lauzun.—Separate and Confidential.*]

My Lord, *Sistovo, January 28th*, 1791.

In several long and very interesting conversations I have had with Marquis Lucchesini, in the last four days, there have occurred many particulars not unworthy of your Grace's notice, and I think it proper to make these the subject of a separate letter.

He is commanded by his sovereign to represent in the most urgent terms, to the Grand Signor on the one hand, and the Grand Vizier on the other, the absolute *necessity* of straining every nerve to collect, early in the spring, the whole force of the Ottoman empire, to act offensively against Russia. He is charged to tell them very frankly, that without the moral certainty that such vigorous efforts shall be made on their side, his Prussian Majesty will think it unadvisable to draw the sword against Russia.

The Turks were exceedingly alarmed at learning that the King of Prussia had agreed to their making a *separate* peace with the Russians, *without his mediation.* This they ignorantly construed to be a *total dereliction of their interests* in that quarter. Monsieur Lucchesini is ordered to clear up that matter to their satisfaction, and to assure them, that if Russia should, during the present Congress, open a pacific negotiation with them, on admissible terms, he (Lucchesini) will undertake to direct that negotiation *from hence.* But if the Russian overtures should not be made till after the conclusion of the Sistovo Congress, he desires the Grand Vizier to fix a place of negotiation at no great distance from hence, and offers to draw nigh to it, in order to assist them with his counsel.

The second commission intrusted to him, is to take place in case the Turkish war with Russia *must* be

prolonged, and that Prussia is to become an active party in it. In that event, M. Lucchesini is to procure a meeting with the Vizier's Kyaja Bey (a man of talents), and concert with him a plan for the ensuing campaign. My colleague has little doubt that he shall be able, if necessary, to get his master's plan for it completely adopted by the Turks; and he has orders, in case of a rupture with Russia, to turn that agreement into the form of a reciprocal convention, and as such, to *sign and seal it*. M. Lucchesini, in the meantime, directs all the Prussian negotiations at Constantinople; and will retard, or forward the Polish treaty there, according as it appears to him to counteract or coincide with his sovereign's views.

Having said so much of the wide scope of this gentleman's present and future projects, it may be expected that I should give an opinion of his talents for the execution of them. I profess that I think his abilities great, and know that his application is *intense* and *unwearied*. Perhaps he undertakes *too much*, and is often forced to proceed too rapidly. He has not, during a long residence in Germany, been able to divest himself entirely of that species of subtlety which is ascribed to his Italian countrymen, but which I look upon as a drawback on his parts.

His greatest foible would be (if not carefully checked) a heat of temper, with a propensity to assume an overbearing tone; yet he has in general discernment enough to adapt his tone pretty nearly to the character of the person whom he addresses. His influence with the Turks would be greater, if his extreme caution not to hurt the feelings of his master's allies, did not deprive the good advice he gives them of that *energy* which would enforce conviction. But his intentions appear to me to be good; and I can perceive that he has ambition enough to look *very high*; though he still

protests to me, that no temptation shall lead him to accept a place in the ministry at Berlin. He has a private cypher with the King, which he often uses, and I believe with some freedom.

He certainly had a great share in opening the King of Prussia's eyes to the dangerous consequences of Count Hertzberg's schemes of *partition, exchange,* and *depredation,* which were so strongly agitated last spring. As Count Hertzberg knows this, his enmity to Lucchesini is but very thinly veiled over. He, on the other hand, lays at Monsieur Hertzberg's door all the false steps which he was *driven* to take at the commencement of his mission to Warsaw, so that their animosity is reciprocal, and the two ministers draw different ways whenever their interests clash. But I may venture to assure your Grace, that in all matters of negotiation (especially in this quarter of the world) Lucchesini's preponderance is, at this moment, unquestionable. Count Hertzberg's antipathy to the words *status quo,* is very natural, as they render the pen of a dashing projector an useless weapon. He was much disappointed at finding that Austria had relinquished all ideas of acquisition or exchange at the expense of the Turks, as he had charged Lucchesini with a progressive scale of equivalent demands to be set up by Prussia.

I should not have troubled your Grace with these details, had they not related to a Court with which his Majesty stands in the most intimate connexion, and to a person who may one day act a conspicuous part there.

I must say a few words in respect to my colleague, Baron Herbert. He is a *little man,* and has been employing little underhand means to ingratiate himself with the Turks, by insinuating that *he* never wishes to *hurry* them in the negotiation, and that, perhaps, they have found the mediators more hard to deal with than himself, though their *adverse* party. The Baron shall

not go without a salutary lesson, if he continues to pursue crooked paths.

I imagine that I have the reputation of being the warm instigator to *expedition*. But this is a matter of indifference to me, as I curry favour with neither party, but endeavour to fulfil my instructions with temper, as well as impartiality; and cannot awaken in my own breast the smallest spark of affection for the Turkish *piastres*. I trust that the approbation of my sovereign, and that of his confidential servants, will crown my ambition, and prove the best reward for the singular inconveniences and fatigues of a winter campaign in politics, in this inhospitable country of Bulgaria, where probably a meeting of negotiators was never assembled before, nor will be hereafter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. S. This letter being written before the conference of to-day, it is therefore a justice I owe to Marquis Lucchesini, to assure your Grace that his conduct and language, when it became necessary to *oblige* the Turks (for their own sake) to adopt the *status quo*, were as open and forcible as we could possibly wish.

[Hitherto, and while yet, alas! upon little more than the threshold of eight months' harassing litigation, now on one side, and now on the other—the dispatches have been given at some length, and with only unimportant omissions; as curious specimens, not often presented to the public, of an Ottoman diplomacy, which even in Turkey must soon become obsolete. Henceforward, while that sense of justice towards himself, so amiably displayed in Sir R. M. Keith's postscript towards another, must dictate such an enumeration of endless chicane and subterfuges, as almost to earn for the mediators the honours of martyrdom—compassion for

the feelings, as well as patience of the reader, must restrict the details to such as are inevitable for the elucidation of the negotiation itself, or the characters of the contracting parties. And if in the early stages of the former, Turkish prejudice and obstinacy have been found to retard the progress of the mediators, it is to be feared (for the honour of Christendom and civilisation) that the impediments cast in the way of its successful termination, by the duplicity and tergiversation of the Austrian cabinet, far exceeded in number, as well as in well-nigh fatal influence on the ultimate issue of the negotiation, those of the timid slaves of Ottoman despotism. Nay it is difficult to rise from the painful perusal of "every step of this," as Sir R. M. Keith in a familiar letter justly styles it, "unchristian Congress," without insensibly adopting the side even of Turkish wrongheadness, when evidently overborne by Austrian subterfuge and want of faith. The two can never, perhaps, be more forcibly placed in juxta-position than in the following extracts.—Ed.]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, Feb. 1st, 1791.

My Lord,

Having dispatched a letter to England in the night of the 18th of January, with the account of the reciprocal and unreserved adoption by both contracting parties of the Reichenbach Convention, I have only to report to your Grace, by this post, what passed yesterday in the seventh conference, where a progress was made by each of the parties presenting a separate draught of such a preliminary act as they wished to have deposited in the hands of the mediating ministers.

[In this conference, the predominance of the *chicane* alluded to, manifested itself in the cavil of the Austrian

minister, at the absence of a distinct specification by *name* of all the previous treaties in existence with the Porte; while the Turks (for the first time on tenable ground) very naturally insisted that the phrase "*all Treaties, Firmans, &c.,*" sufficiently included the desired specification. This view was taken, but ineffectually, by *all* the mediators. The conference being adjourned in consequence, Turkish absurdity regained the ascendant as follows.—Ed.]

Since writing the above, the Ottoman ministers have this moment acquainted me that Wednesday (*the last Wednesday of the moon*) is a *fatal day*, and that no good Mussulman can think of putting his signature to an act of moment on such a day. To corroborate this forcible argument, the Mollah de la Mecque (the Machiavel of the mission) has done me the honour to quote to me an example, which he is *sure must* carry conviction; that the unfortunate Grand Vizier, Hamid Halil, was prevailed on to accept of the Viziriat on an *ominous Wednesday*, and had his head (as might have been foreseen) cut off, on just such *another*. To such cogent reasoning your Grace will do me the justice to believe me incapable of turning a deaf ear, and the conference was postponed till *Thursday* next.

[In the conference thus adjourned, it was the turn of the Prussian minister to throw down the apple of discord by reading a written paper, formally objecting to the terms of the Austrian plenipotentiary's draft of the preliminaries; a step which well nigh menaced a premature suspension of the Congress.—Ed.]

The Imperial minister seemed a good deal *ruffled* by the contents of this paper, and the arguments which accompanied it. He perused the declaration, and then entered into a long and *tart* reply. Baron Herbert was so far off his guard as to say that a determined rejection on the part of the Prussian minister of his own declara-

tion would *suspend the Congress.* He desired Monsieur Lucchesini to put on paper what he had before *said* in contradiction to it. The Prussian minister professed his readiness to do so, but stipulated for having the *demand* also made *in writing.*

Baron Herbert, ever ready to indulge his *Cacoethes scribendi,* employed a considerable time in putting to paper his ill-digested thoughts, and delivered them (in the inclosed form C.) to the Prussian minister. Marquis Lucchesini withdrew into a separate room to prepare his rejoinder; and the Ottoman ministers (who had taken little share in the debate) retired to their own chamber to say their prayers.

There appearing, on the resumption of the conference, great danger of our seeing the prolongation of a very tedious, unnecessary, and unsuitable war of the pen, I seized the first pause of litigation to strive to put an end to it.

I had observed, from the beginning of this dispute, that Baron Herbert's strenuous endeavours to lessen the weight of the Reichenbach Convention and his present preposterous attempt to establish a *second and separate* basis for the treaty of Sistovo, had furnished just cause for the resistance of the Prussian minister, and for that misunderstanding which was likely to be drawn to great length.

I therefore addressed myself *aloud* to the Imperial minister, saying that as in his first reply to the Russian minister, he had manifested an intention of calling upon the mediators of the maritime powers to explain their sentiments upon the matter in question, I would (to get rid of this tiresome paper war) deliver aloud our sentiments in regard to the long contested point of two *separate bases.* That I would submit them to the whole assembly, as comprised in two *short phrases,* which I would afterwards cause to be inserted in the protocol of the Congress.

The following are the precise words I used, in the French language, "Deux *bases separées* ne peuvent exister, puis qu'il y en a une *d'établie* par la Convention de Reichenbach, dont nos maîtres sont garants. Il y a deux *actes*, la Convention de Reichenbach, et la paix de Sistovo; mais il ne saurait y avoir *qu'une base*, et cette *unique* base est la Convention de Reichenbach."

It was a matter of infinite satisfaction to me to find, that it produced a very sudden and salutary effect, far beyond my expectation. *All parties were satisfied.*

Baron Herbert after a few words of explanation, only employed as a saving transition from *downright obstinacy* to *perfect compliance*, made an offer (in which I warmly encouraged him) to submit the whole to the judgment of the mediating ministers; requesting *them* to draw up such a preliminary act as they should judge most likely to be satisfactory to all sides.

I must not omit to mention that Baron Herbert in his usual style of dealing (he was bred a Jesuit) proposed, in the hearing of Marquis Lucchesini, that *I* should take on *myself* alone, the construction of the above-mentioned formulary. Your Grace will easily conceive that I rejected, in the most express terms, this artful and adulatory insinuation.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, Feb. 8th, 1791.

My Lord,

In order to fulfil, without delay, the request made to us (the mediating ministers,) in the last conference, we employed the forenoon of Saturday in uniting our joint endeavours to draw up such a *project* of a *preliminary* act, as we conceived to be liable to little

or no objection. We established the basis of the negotiation at Sistovo on its only and *incontestible* ground, the Convention of Reichenbach. We deduced from them the rights which appertain to each sovereign *in virtue* of that convention, and we proceeded to ascertain the actual state of our negotiation, and the different obligations imposed on each of the contracting parties by that convention, and the most strict adherence to the principle of the *status quo ante bellum;* specifying such articles as have been clearly *agreed upon,* and such others as remain *to be discussed.* Our intention is that the Imperial plenipotentary should sign a French copy of the said act, giving to his Court the usual precedence of rank and title, and that the Turks should sign an exact translation, with the precedence they are accustomed to give their sovereign; that these two acts should be exchanged by the contracting parties, in presence of the mediators, and be afterwards put into our hands, till the definitive treaty shall be brought to full maturity.

I send your Grace enclosed a copy of that act sent *previously,* as we presented it to Count Herbert yesterday, at a meeting held at my house for the purpose. Here, and not without surprise as well as regret, we found the Imperial minister, notwithstanding the *full assent* he appeared to give to my declaration in the last conference, extremely averse to recognise the Convention of Reichenbach as the *basis* of our negotiation. He assured us that he had *express* orders from Vienna, *not to admit* that principle in the body of the definitive treaty, nor to acknowledge that the reciprocal obligations of the contracting parties flowed from that source. He said he would consent to the mention of the Reichenbach Convention in the *preamble* of the treaty of peace, but only *historically,* and not as the ground-work of treaty.

We in vain combatted this mode of reasoning, which

to us appeared very false, by quoting the words of the Emperor's ratification, those of the ratification, and full powers given by the mediating Courts; and lastly, the terms of that acceptance which we had drawn with infinite difficulty from the Ottomans.

The Imperial minister persisted in assuring us that he was not at liberty to sign our project. From this it appeared evident to all the mediators, that the Court of Vienna (from what *solid* notion we cannot comprehend,) is hitherto determined to avoid, as much as possible, the acknowledgment of the Reichenbach Convention, as the *original foundation* and *restrictive rule* of our present negotiation.

Baron Herbert was not to be shaken. He said his instructions on this head were very recent and positive. He said he would reflect maturely on the project we had delivered, but feared he must send to Vienna for a decision. Should he find it absolutely necessary to do so, we are in the firm belief that the candour and liberality which are so conspicuous in the character of the Emperor, will lead that monarch to order his minister to subscribe an act dictated by the truest zeal, and the most rigid impartiality.

R. M. K.

[*By Lucchesini's Courier.*]

Sistovo, Feb. 10*th*, 1791.

My Lord,

The Prussian minister intending to send a courier to-day, to Vienna and Berlin, I seize the opportunity of informing your Grace of the unfortunate result of our conference yesterday with the Imperial minister, at his house. Baron Herbert *read* to us a sort of preface to the business (of which he gave us no copy,) and then delivered to each of the mediators a copy of the enclosed *contre projet*.

Although it begins by acknowledging that "*les bases*" (M. Herbert employs the *plural* to cover his absurd proposition of *bases separées* in his former declaration,) of the present negotiation were *fixed* at Reichenbach, he will not admit that the stipulations now to be converted into a definitive treaty, flow *unquestionably* from that original source.

In contradistinction to the clear order of stipulation established there, and adhered to by the mediators in their project, Baron Herbert throws all the *three* articles of *restitution, deposit of fortresses,* and that of the Emperor's future *neutrality,* into one article of *immeasurable* length; and does this with the view of preventing their being canvassed or elucidated *separately.* He suppresses his own satisfactory phrase, in a preceding declaration, regarding the Emperor's neutrality "*pendant la guerre,*" and substitutes a vague one in its room. He then lengthens out the article comprehending the obligations incumbent on the Porte, far beyond its natural limits, and to the exclusion of all remonstrance on the subject of the *représailles par l'épée,* which the Turks are so very solicitous to abolish.

Either of these artful (and in themselves injudicious) deviations from the plain road which the Reichenbach Convention had marked out to *us all,* would have been sufficient to render this counter-project of the Imperial minister *inadmissible.* But the *intentional* omission (for such he acknowledged it to be) of the article recognising the King of Prussia's *stipulated right* to be the guarantee of the definitive treaty, determined the Prussian minister to reject the counter-project with expressions of surprise and *disdain.*

We questioned Baron Herbert in regard to the motive of such an unaccountable omission, and then the *secret came out,* that he had orders from his Court to "admit of *no stipulation* or *express acknowledgment* in

the definitive treaty of Sistovo, of the right of guarantee *secured* to his Prussian Majesty by the Convention of Reichenbach." Baron Herbert made no scruple of repeating several times to the three mediators the above-mentioned explanation of his orders, and consequently all means of coming to an agreement drew to an end.

I told him that my Court had guaranteed not merely *one single principle* of the Reichenbach Convention, but the whole of the engagements contracted there. That the King of Prussia's guarantee was an express article of those stipulations, and the mention of it an act of indispensable justice. Marquis Lucchesini read the forcible and comprehensive paper enclosed, to the same purport, but without the smallest effect. We could only then express our regrets that the negotiation was thus retarded by the *intentional omission* as well as *studied confusion* of principles and consequences, which were so apparent in the paper delivered by the Imperial minister, and press on him the same expedition in the dispatch to his Court for further orders, which Marquis Lucchesini was about to manifest in his report of past proceedings to Berlin.

Sistovo, February 11th.

My Lord,

I availed myself yesterday of the departure of the Prussian courier for Vienna and Berlin, to convey to your Grace a circumstantial account of the unforeseen obstacle to the progress of our negotiation which the counter-project of the Imperial minister has raised. We, the mediators, remain in the full persuasion that the present appeal to the Courts of Venice and Berlin, will facilitate the happy termination of our business.

I hope that the King's messenger, Lauzun, is by this time very far advanced on his journey to London, and I rely implicitly on your lordship's goodness in shortening my most uncomfortable residence here, by the

speedy return of those orders and instructions which will enable me to put the finishing hand to my share in the business.

The winter is now very severe in this part of Bulgaria, but we are assured that there is little danger of the Danube being *frozen over* at this season of the year.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

To these physical inconveniences and hardships (no trifling ones to a sexagenarian, braving a Bulgarian winter in a parcel of detached wooden huts) were added, during the long and dreary inaction to which Austrian bad faith—scarcely veiled by the shadow of an ostensible pretext—for many succeeding weeks condemned the mediators, the increasing difficulty of reconciling to such indecent procrastination their Turkish colleagues, and the probability of all their efforts for the pacification of Eastern Europe being frustrated by the new-born ardour for the resumption of the war, announced and explained in the following dispatch.

Sistovo, February 15*th.*

My Lord,

Whilst we find ourselves in the disagreeable situation of an entire suspension of the affairs of the Congress till the return of the couriers from Vienna and Berlin, our attention is chiefly turned to the active measures pursued by the Turkish Government to bring all their forces into the field at a much earlier season than usual.

In addition to intelligence received from several quarters of the increase of the army on the Lower Danube, by letters from Schumla (brought hither by a Tartar in four-and-twenty hours) we learned yesterday not only the *deposition*, but the *tragical end* of the late Grand Vizier Hassan Pasha. He arrived at

Schumla on Saturday evening, where a Chiaoux Bashi, sent from Constantinople, demanded from him the seal of his high office. He was led to believe that his life was in no danger, and that he would be sent into exile; but at midnight the executioners broke into his bedchamber, and put him to death. He endeavoured to defend his life, and fired two pistols without effect, being himself shot dead, after having received the wound of a lance in the face. His head was cut off, and sent to Constantinople. It is supposed that his brother (who commanded at Baba Dag) has shared the same fate. He is by no means regretted, as the Imperial *firman* for his deposition accuses him, and very justly, of having disobeyed the orders sent him (after the conclusion of the armistice with Austria) to keep his army together and cross the Danube, for the relief of the important fortress of Ismail! By orders from Constantinople the horse-tails of the new Grand Vizier were to be displayed at Schumla on the 15th instant, and the 25th of March is appointed for the assembling and encampment of the Ottoman forces on the Lower Danube.

Jusuf Pasha, who was Grand Vizier at the commencement of this war, is again raised to that high office, and great reliance is placed on his military talents and enterprising character. He had lately been appointed Pasha of Bosnia, and was on his way thither when his former dignity was restored to him. The Turkish ministers expect he will arrive at Schumla in eight or ten days.

[*Cypher.*]

Whatever doubts may have remained at Berlin respecting the firm determination of the Grand Signor, to exert the whole force of his empire during the next campaign, are now effectually removed by Jusuf Pasha's being reinstated in the post of Grand Vizier; as he

himself was the first promoter of the present war, and has now his honour and life at stake to promote it with the utmost vigour. This event gives great pleasure to my Prussian colleague, who writes this day to Schumla and Constantinople to keep up the warlike spirit which now reigns at the Porte. I can perceive that the Imperial minister is much concerned at the reappointment of Jusuf Pasha. They were in direct opposition to each other at the commencement of the war, and he knows that this Grand Vizier is very jealous of Austria. I am heartily sorry to find that the affairs of the Netherlands unhappily conspire with the disputes at this Congress to increase the ill-humour between the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna. I trust that the two monarchs will, at this juncture, give scope to the impulse of their own good qualities and principles rather than to the suggestions of these ministers, else I fear that all public affairs on this side of Europe may be sadly embroiled.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, February 13th, 1791.

I RECEIVED your New Year's letter, my dear Anne, a few days ago, and am in hourly expectation of one from Edinburgh. You have a world of *Auld Reekie* news to send me, and I am famished for want of British "*clish-ma-claver.*"* My cronies here in Turkey are duller than *mill-horses*, and I am forced to say that their stubbornness exceeds that of Mahomet's mule. However, we had got them to a strike a gentle trot in the way to termination, when the Emperor's Plenipo thought proper to make us *halt*, by raising a Jesuitical stumbling-block,

* *Anglicé*, gossip.

(the gentleman had the honour to be bred a Jesuit) which we have not been able to remove, without an appeal to Vienna. This delay, however, will break no squares, for we are well assured of the Emperor's *candid* and *liberal* sentiments, and have no doubts of his setting all *to rights* again, long before my messenger (who carried my last letter to you) can come back from England. I hope, my dear Anne, that about the middle of March I shall be in possession of all my orders, and that in the end of this month I may put my seal to the parchment.

As to state news—I whisper in your ear we are going to discard a Grand Vizier, Ruschuk Effendi (a silly fellow) and I believe we shall put Mehemet Ali, lately from the Dardanelles, in his place. See what a State-intriguer your brother is! But not a word of this to the *vulgar!*

February 15*th.*

I am sorry, my dear Anne, to be obliged to end my nonsensical epistle by the details of a Turkish tragedy. The Grand Vizier was deposed four days ago, which he deserved; but they let the poor man go to bed in the belief that he had nothing to fear but being *exiled.* They broke into his room at midnight, and cut off his head; what a pleasure it is to live under such a government!

Jusuf Pasha (a clever active officer, who was Grand Vizier at the beginning of the war), is again the chief minister, and general. I hope he will both move his stumps, and keep his head on his shoulders. Adieu, my dear sisters; I am perfectly well, but dog-tired of Bulgaria. In six weeks I hope to be released. Love to friends and cronies. Good bless you all!

R. M. K.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT, *Hague, Feb. 19th*, 1791.

I have long wished for an occasion to write a sort of chit-chat letter to you in answer to the friendly notes which have accompanied several most interesting dispatches from you. I am now in hourly expectation of seeing *Lauzun*,* not that I believe you will come to any absolute conclusion till something is decided as to the Russian pacification. But the fair and candid proceeding of the Imperial minister in his *second* note, seems to make it difficult for the other parties to postpone coming to some preliminary transmissible to their respective Courts.†

The question as to the revival of the treaties, it must be confessed (at least I am willing individually to confess it both for myself and the Grand Pensionary) never occurred to the recollection of any of us at the period of the Reichenbach Convention. It cannot be denied, on the one hand, that they come fairly within the principle of the *status quo*. If, however, in their specific contents there should be any clause which militates against a more recent argument, good faith requires such clause to be modified and corrected. Thus far, I believe there will not prevail any great diversity of opinion at Vienna and Berlin, and still less here and in England. But it is a very different consideration whether these treaties should be specified or renewed, otherwise than by a general expression; nor can it, I think, be argued, that they have any pretension to the guarantee of the mediating powers.

* The King's Messenger, who was the bearer of the extorted *Turkish* concessions.

† Written it will be perceived, previous to the transfer of obstacles to the side of Austria.

It must be heavy work for you to agitate so complicated a business, with people who have no common language with you; who are afraid to charge themselves with any responsibility, and who, at the same time, have all the ignorance and prejudice of the sixteenth century. Notwithstanding all this, your important task is in a good train; its results will, I am sure, prove advantageous to all the parties concerned, and highly creditable to you.

Your last dispatch is dated 18th January, and will proceed to-night to England. It comes very quick to this place. If the Russian crisis were decided, you would see your way clear. The Empress continues to answer us very civilly, but with unmoved determination, that she will receive with pleasure our good offices to obtain for her the cession of Ockzakow and its district. We continue to knock at every door (and not without success) to join us in recommending to her Imperial Majesty to content herself with the conditions of the *status quo*. In the meantime, we keep up a fleet of twenty-four ships of the line, and the Emperor advances his military preparations; I still hope and trust, however, that some means will be found to avoid extremities. Now a word on other subjects.

I should say a few words to you on the Netherlands' business, though you will have better intelligence from Lord Elgin at the fountain head. It was neither a wise nor a dignified measure in the Imperial ministers to engage their excellent sovereigns in the apparent chicane which is involved in the proposed clause which they wish to add to their pacification. It is probable that the object was to flatter Prince Kaunitz by seeming to sanction and renew the measures and arrangements of his ministry in the provinces; but if the Allied Courts had lent themselves to so strange a complaisance, I have not a doubt that in spite of the army upon the spot, the new fermentation would have been extreme and perma-

nent. I have so much faith in the Emperor's wisdom that I think and trust he will inform himself how ill he has been counselled, and settle the business which must otherwise remain unsettled. It would interest you little were I to enter into particulars, but I think I could show to you that if we were disposed to admit this unbecoming clause, we should admit a mere absurdity and nullity in its effect; though it bears pretensions which ought not to have been brought forward. In the meantime, I pray and trust that none of *us* may ever be so ill-used in our negotiations as the Comte de Mercy is by his employers. On this side of Europe all goes well, except in France, where *ruere in pejus* continues to be the prevailing principle of action. God knows how it will end.

Nothing can be more brilliant than our position in England, and the advantages to result from maintaining it are such, that I dread anything that may seem to endanger it. Notwithstanding the interruption arising from the Spanish business,* the net revenue for 1790 was 16,000,000*l.* sterling,† being near 400,000*l.* more than ever was known, and a degree of opulence is now circulating through the country, with an unexempled energy and activity, both in agriculture and manufactures. Mr. Pitt is going to explain before a new committee the general statement of revenue, of expense, of the sinking fund, of the progress towards the reduction of the debt, and of the actual state of commerce. In the meantime the measures for paying the late expenses are executing without any trouble, or any apparent sensation in the country.

There have been many reports of our sufferings in the East Indies. Those reports are positively disproved by

* The war lately existing in that quarter, but happily terminated.

† Little more than one-third of the present times.

dispatches of a subsequent and recent date; and except that a war at any rate is a bad thing, we have every reason to believe that Tippoo Sultan will have the worst of the business. In speaking of wars, I always have before my eyes the concluding sentence of the history of one of the Russian wars, "*Ainsi finit cette malheureuse guerre: ah! quelle guerre ne l'est pas?*"

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

MY LORD, *Sistovo, Feb. 22nd.*

Since the 20th instant, when I had the honour to write to your Grace by a Prussian estafette, nothing has occurred to make any external alteration in the situation of affairs. As the Ottomans are still without advices from their new Grand Vizier, it is supposed that in his journey from Bosnia to Schumla, he has taken a road far distant from this part of Bulgaria. There is such a heavy fall of snow at this moment, that the roads in this hilly country will become almost impassable.

[*Cypher.*]

It was matter of concern to me to learn yesterday, from the Minister of Prussia, that his letters from Berlin by the last post, afford the most convincing proofs of the animosity which reigns there, towards the Court of Vienna.

I can easily conceive that the inconsistent conduct and equivocal language of the Austrian ministry, have given just cause for that animosity. But I cannot help regretting that the first instructions sent to my Prussian colleague are of such a nature as to remove all probability of a conclusion of our business here, to a very distant period.

His Prussian Majesty declares that he is not only

resolved to refuse his guarantee to every sort of commercial treaty between Austria and the Porte, (a determination which appears to me very justifiable, and which might have been foreseen), but that he will, in no shape, concur in the renewal or confirmation of these treaties. If these resolutions are to be invariably adhered to, I imagine it will be a difficult matter to bring the Court of Vienna to subscribe to them. At all events, on that supposition we should not advance one step in three months, under the timid and versatile management of my Austrian colleague.

[*Extract.*]

February 25th, 1791.

My Lord,

The affairs of the Congress are in a state of entire suspension till the return of the couriers from Vienna and Berlin.

[*Cypher.*]

The two last posts from the latter place have produced a very great change in the language of the Prussian minister here. He now leans entirely to the side of protection, and foretels many more obstacles to the assembling of the Turkish army, than the Turks themselves. If those projected delays in our negotiation are judged necessary for the good cause by the Court of Berlin, I will give way with a good grace. But I sincerely wish that the Prussian Cabinet would adopt one settled plan of conduct with respect to this Congress; as I have had occasion to remark more than once, that the orders from thence, by three successive posts, are in contradiction with each other.

[*Cypher.*]

March 1st, 1791.

I have talked very ingenuously to my Prussian colleague, in regard to the frequent variations in the

measures of his Court; and he seems convinced that we must now lay down a settled plan of conduct, and one as far conciliatory as rigid impartiality, and a just attention to the dignity of our Courts can permit: that we may expect great haughtiness and many false reasonings from the cabinet of Prince Kaunitz; but that we must meet them with temper, as well as firmness, and refute them by calm discussion.

That minister* has promised me that if the Court of Vienna shall embrace our preliminary project without any very material alteration, he will take upon him to go on in that line, without any fear of being disavowed by his sovereign. He is determined to make a point of suppressing the preposterous clause by which Austria would assert the right of reprisals by the sword, and when that shall be effected, has no doubt of engaging the King of Prussia to combine with his guarantee of the *status quo*, a simple ratification of the commercial treaties.

I am, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistovo, March 2nd, 1791.

I HAVE been for this fortnight past, my dear sister, as dull as a moulting parrot, who cannot even make a *noise* in his cage. A paroxysm of teazing litigation between two of my colleagues, produced, about the middle of last month, a direct opposition of opinion, which proved a sandbank, on which our political bark stuck fast; but without any danger of shipwreck. Couriers have been sent to the master pilots at Berlin and Vienna. Their directions are now expected every hour, and I am persuaded that the vessel will soon be

* The Prussian Plenipotentiary.

set afloat, and with a fair prospect of ending her voyage happily. In the mean time, I have led an insipid life; such a life as would have *tired an oyster*. But what with five German romances, three political folios, and half a dozen French firebrand pamphlets, and a couple of new almanacks, I have crept on through my vegetable existence, and enriched my mind with some queer knowledge, and a supplement to my favourite store of nonsense! If I were to tell my Mussulman messmates what a delight I take in *nonsense*, every hair of their head would wag contempt at me. But the truth is, that these Plenipos are so very wise, so mortally sententious, and so devoid of imagination, that a facetious cobbler is worth a score of them.

My Christian colleagues are not remarkable for pleasantry; yet I have heard them laugh *outright* (contrary to the advice of Lord Chesterfield), and they have all genius enough to enter into the spirit of Burke's book, which I have lent to them, and as they read English, it has proved a real feast to each of them in his turn. The French nation is going on to enhance the value of that book, by plunging deeper and deeper into the slough of *anarchy*. I was sorry to learn by a late letter from Arbuthnot, that the democratic madness is daily gaining ground at Geneva, and at Lausanne.

But softly, my dear Anne! here am I wasting my paper upon *Christian* follies, when I have a score of Turkish "*uncos*"* to relate. You remember in my last that we had just deposed a Grand Vizier, and that the Sultan had been graciously pleased to order the poor man's *head* to attend at the Sublime Porte, but without the *body!* A similar act of favour has since been extended to the Grand Vizier's brother, and their two heads are now stuck on the gate of their *benevolent*

* *Anglicé*, marvels.

sovereign. Their goods and lands are confiscated, their wives and children turned out to beggary, and that tragedy consummated in the true Turkish style! The reinstated Grand Vizier, Jusuf Pasha, is come to Schumla,* his head-quarters (at a day's journey from hence), and it is now his business to show that he has a head *worth keeping on his shoulders*. It was he, Jusuf, who reduced all the towns and villages of the Bannat of Temeswaer into heaps of ashes, three years ago (as I told you, in my peregrination); and as he likewise was kind enough to drive *all* the inhabitants of those countries, man and beast, into slavery, he bids fair to tinge his future laurels (in whatever land he may acquire them) with a deep shade of the crimson dye. The *possibility* of preventing such devastation makes me hold up *manfully* against all the miseries of a Sistovo life, and if I am happy enough to be able to say hereafter, to my conscience and to my friends, that I have contributed *essentially* to thrust all manner of swords, poignards, and scimitars back into their *scabbards*, my Tweeddale mutton will taste sweeter to me than the finest venison, for the rest of my days. I have been sadly vexed by all these procrastinations of the salutary work, but I hold myself *certain* of its being well ended *here*, and within a short space of time.

As to the Northern heroine, she has bought Ismail *very dear*, by the loss of five or six thousand of her best soldiers; and in my opinion still *dearer* by the inhuman butchery of almost twenty thousand Turks, half of whom were old people, children, and women. If Russia be determined to have another campaign, in order to *thin* the ranks of the human race, I trust that the lesson to be brought *home* to her Imperial Majesty will be such an one as to leave a *wholesome* impression for the rest of

* Since so celebrated in the Russian invasion of Turkey.

her reign. But I hate the very name of wars; let's talk of something else!

The great news of Sistovo, for instance! Our fishermen on the Danube caught a sort of sturgeon the other day, and sold it to my cook; it weighed *only* about one hundred and eighty English pounds—a mere trifle! for every inhabitant of Sistovo will take his Alcoran oath that at Widdin, not far from hence, two sturgeon were taken two years ago, the one of above *seven*, and the other above *eight* hundred weight. I am a great traveller, Anne, but as little inclined to lie as any of the tribe. Apropos of sturgeon,—your acquaintance, the dropsical Waiwode, is dying fast. But, alas! another harpy is ready to take his place.

March 3rd.

Oho! Mrs. Anne! here comes your manifesto of the 29th of January. It shows we are on an excellent footing of correspondence; and that nonsense circulates as it should do. You ask me if I pick up any of the *Saracen secrets* by my occult knowledge of their language? I did at first, a great many: but the cunning plenipos took to the *Persian* in their private innuendos. I am studying that language hard, and I discovered the Reis Effendi saying in Persian t'other day, to the Mollah de la Mecque, these very important words: "Ereile penal uzimi," which means, "*Your tobacco is better than mine.*" I immediately saw to the bottom of the Mahometan metaphor, employed to put me on the wrong scent, and was sure that his Excellency said to the Mollah, "Sir Robert Keith has beat *my* arguments out of doors, try if you can muster up any better."

It is a charming thing to possess half a hundred languages; and I regret much that my Erse begins to grow *rusty*, but I will rub it up again, the first winter I shall pass in *Corryarick*. You see I have got into the custom of setting down my cage upon a *hill*—towards

Christmas! I intend to pass a fortnight on Mount Hæmus, which I can now see from my back windows.

But to return to my negotiations. That same negotiation with the Porte which you recommend to me, in order to obtain *two tails at least* before I set out, meets my fancy mightily. It squares so cleverly with your other advice about matrimony, that it deserves the most mature consideration. But pray don't bespeak my bride till I am dead sure of my tails!

Did you observe in the newspapers that our brave Emperor Leopold had the chicken-pox about a month ago? All Vienna, young and old, were smitten with that distemper, but all got well again. His Emperorship and the Kingships of Naples, are going to set out in a fortnight for Italy, to install the young Duke of Tuscany in his dominions. The King of Naples has delighted all Germany by his unaffected *cantyness*.* He laughs, and junkets, and Nimrods, and gambols, as if he had never seen a diadem, and had not a single drop of Bourbon blood in his veins. Alas! for Louis the Sixteenth! I wonder if there will ever be a Louis the Seventeenth? But I wander sadly, as all great orators are apt to do.

To return to Imperial Leopold; I trust that he will bestow his ultimate *fiat* on our business here before he sets out for Italy. What a sad thing it would be to send a political *query* from Sistovo to Naples, and to wait for an answer! All our beards would grow grey (mine is already two inches long) before we could untie in that manner the knots of our negotiation.

Oh! I had almost forgotten to tell you to take out your maps and study the geography of Transylvania, and the course of the rivers Marosch and Theiss, and the county of Marmarosch, as I shall direct my course homeward that way. I shall only stop a day or two at

* *Anglicé*, cheerfulness.

Hermandstadt, and as much with my friend the Bishop of Groswaradin, who is a great admirer of yours, and inquires often and kindly for *Miss* Barbara Stirling.* My love to that young lady. She shall have the handsomest Turkish handkerchief in my possession, and one that is remarkable for having been thrown by the Grand Signor in the face of his favourite damsel not a month ago! You shall have three or four handkerchiefs to distribute, and if your fair paintress will accept one, it is at her service, *mais sans conséquence.* Pray offer my respects to all the Buccleugh family in return for all their goodness towards me and mine. I hope they esteem me too much to deprive me of the happiness of receiving and *cherishing* Lord Dalkeith at *Vienna.* I have written to my good friend *Madame la première Maréchale de Schoenberg* at Dresden, to show him every attention for my sake; she will do all she can to render his stay there agreeable. It was a real disappointment to me to be absent from Vienna whilst Sir John Macpherson (who expresses for me, though *unknown,* a very flattering partiality) passed two months in that capital. Tell his friend ——— that Sir John and I had actually made an appointment, at a thousand miles' distance, to meet at my table in Vienna, and drink a bottle together to the health of our friends at *Talisker.* Sir John is gone to Italy for the winter, but I hope to see him in Austria a few months hence. Say everything that is cordial from me to your Dowager chum,† and tell her that she and her children are by much the best arguments for *tardy* matrimony that I ever met with. But you know I am to talk no more of this matter till I am dubbed a Bashaw. Hearty good wishes to all manner of friends. Your town of Edinburgh will be so very

* The *nonagenarian* grand aunt so often cordially mentioned.

† The late Dowager Countess of Balcarres, who at the advanced age of ninety, saw herself surrounded by a large and flourishing family.

geometrical, that the very *dubs** will run at right angles. *Apropos* to your college—might not I in my old age, lay a claim to be your professor of *oriental languages?* This has been a misty morning, my dear Anne, and I have turned it to account in palavering with your spinstership. But I must now get on my nag, and go to eat tough mutton and shrivelled carrots with my chum Baron Haeften, who is well in spite of bad food and ill-digested politics. You shall have a supplementary dab of my nonsense to-morrow morning; in the mean time, "Whizzel durg quanga," that is to say in Bulgarian, "Joy be with you."

March 4th.

It is fit, my dear Anne, that I should make you acquainted with this same new Vizier, Jusuf Pasha, who is going to make so much noise. He was born a Georgian (not a *Jacobite*) Christian, and was, consequently, a Whig from his cradle. He was kidnapped from his parents at six years old, and sent to Constantinople to be a *slave*, and thereby made his fortune; and that is, perhaps, the reason why he makes slaves of all Christians he can lay his hands on. His genius was first displayed as a *rice* merchant, and the Grand Admiral, finding him sell some toothsome rice to the fleet, advanced Jusuf to the dignity of his—pipe-stopper! Don't smile, Mrs. Anne,—this is a true bill; and to a great man, who smokes tobacco *sixteen* hours in the four-and-twenty, an ingenious pipe-stopper is no indifferent personage. He *stopped* so well, that he did not stop there, but became in time coffee-maker, inkstand-carrier, purse-bearer, secretary, treasurer, and agent at the Porte. Here he got his *first tail*, and was in the way of a second, when he made a small mistake, by giving out and believing that his old master the Captain Pasha was

* *Anglicé*, gutters.

dead, when he was only in a fainting fit; by which the Grand Signor had almost been led into the other mistake of confiscating the Grand Admiral's property just as he came to himself again! This caused a *coldness* between the Admiral and Jusuf; but the latter made a courtly tergiversation, got into the Grand Signor's service, and acquired another *tail* into the bargain.

He was then Pasha of the Morea, where, with a *third tail,* he did wonders; and his old master the Captain Pasha being absent in Egypt, who so fit to be Grand Vizier (on a vacancy) as the Georgian Jusuf? The Captain Pasha came back from Egypt—kissed the hem of the Grand Vizier Jusuf's garment, *as in duty bound,* and wished him at the devil, as *human nature commanded.* A year after, Jusuf was *disgraced,* and who became Grand Vizier, but the old Captain Pasha? Down goes Jusuf, lower and lower—Pasha of Widdin, then degraded to be Pasha of Giustendil, and he might have been once more reduced to the trade of a *rice merchant,* had not the old Vizier his master chosen to *die.* The tide again turns in favour of Jusuf, and the late Grand Vizier being a blockhead, and his head condemned to the block, in steps my Jusuf, and he, at this moment, promises to be the saviour of the Ottoman Empire, and the terror of Prince Potemkin! Heaven grant he may! God bless the sisterhood.

R. M. K.

[*Extract.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

MY LORD, *Sistova, March 4th,* 1791.

Authentic information will have been transmitted to your Grace from Vienna, respecting the very open and upright language which his Imperial Majesty was pleased to hold to Baron Jacobi, in his audience of the 17th February, touching the affairs of the Congress.

We hear the most favourable conclusions from thence, and entertain a sanguine hope that orders will have been sent to Baron Herbert, to adopt the most material articles of our fulminary project, and to carry the negotiation to a speedy conclusion. We understand the Ottomans intend to press the Imperial minister to resume the general conferences.

[*Cypher.*]

March 8th, 1791.

The letters brought us yesterday from Vienna contain several reports which were current there, respecting the language held on the preceding Saturday, by Baron Spielman, of a very different purport from those gracious and conciliatory expressions, touching the affairs of this Congress, which the sovereign himself employed two days before towards the minister of Prussia. Your Grace will easily conceive, that I am far from giving credit to such reports; as their having any foundation in truth, would only prove that the inferior persons in the Austrian Chancery are bold enough to avow and to support opinions which are by no means consistent with the declared sentiments of his Imperial Majesty. I am much afraid, however, my lord, that what I lately predicted, is but too likely to be verified; and that the haughtiness of Prince Kaunitz will find means to counteract the upright intentions of the Emperor. I confess that I cannot comprehend in what manner it can be derogatory to the honour of that monarch to acknowledge the basis laid at Reichenbach, at the same time that he declares his readiness to fulfil every stipulation of that convention. Should Prince Kaunitz have prevailed, and dictated such orders to Baron Herbert, it will be the means of throwing our negotiation here into absolute confusion.

R. M. K.

Sistovo, March 15th, 1791.

My Lord,

I can hardly express to your Grace how irksome the suspense has been in which I have lived, during the *forty days* which have now elapsed, since the last general conference was held here. I can form to myself no idea of the motives which engage the Courts of Vienna and Berlin to delay the transmittal of those orders which their plenipotentiaries requested by separate couriers dispatched from hence on the 10th February, and who arrived at their destinations with uncommon expedition.

The Ottoman ministers are in a very disagreeable situation, and declare that they receive frequent reproaches from the Porte, touching the dilatory proceedings of the Congress; putting us in mind of the loud complaints we made against them for a suspension of seventeen days, in the beginning of our negotiation, whereas above six weeks have now elapsed, without advancing one step, or even holding a general conference.

The mediating ministers do what they can to keep them in good temper, in hopes that as the Emperor is setting out for Italy, his ultimate orders to his ministers here will prove satisfactory and conclusive; as it cannot be supposed that his Imperial Majesty will leave points of such difficult and delicate discussion to be treated hereafter by a correspondence between Sistovo and Florence! I have had a very interesting dispatch from the King of Prussia to his minister here,—in which that monarch declares his firm resolution to maintain invariably every one of his rights acquired at Reichenbach, and ordering Mons. Lucchesini not to give way in *any shape* to Baron Herbert's groundless pretensions. Your Grace will judge from thence of the probability of our negotiation yet encountering insuperable difficulties.

R. M. K.

[*By Lucchesini's Courier.*]

Sistovo, March 20th, 1791.

My Lord,

I seize the opportunity of the departure of a Prussian courier for Vienna, to enter into some detail respecting the critical state of affairs here, since the determination of the Court of Vienna to keep this negotiation in a state of *suspense* for some time longer, has become manifest to all the ministers of the Congress.

The Turks are more and more confirmed in their suspicion that the Austrian ministry (either from political views of their own, or in compliance with the suggestions of Russia) have resolved to leave the Porte in doubt with regard to the issue of the negotiation, in order to perplex the Grand Vizier in the choice of his plan of operations for the ensuing campaign, and perhaps with the hope of deriving advantages from the extension of the war to other parts of Europe.

Your Grace will have learned from Vienna, and on much better grounds than any on which I can found a judgment at Sistovo, what have been the real motives of Austria for her sudden and almost total change of conduct and language. But I am well founded in drawing, from an expression employed by Count Cobentzel to Baron Jacobi, the conclusion that Austria has conceived the project of retaining possession of the conquests in Wallachia, &c., beyond the term of the present armistice.

It appears to me on the other hand a self-evident proposition, that nothing could be more prejudicial to the interests of the Ottoman Empire, than to listen to any proposal for the prolongation of that armistice.

By consenting to it the Grand Vizier's hands would be in a great measure tied up from making an effectual

use of those advantages which he has a right to promise himself from an early exertion of that great military force, which (by an activity hitherto unknown in this empire, and with a profusion of expense) will be collected under his standard in the course of the month of May; an early period, when the Russian army cannot be recruited and re-equipped after the losses of the last campaign.

It certainly depends on the Grand Vizier to avail himself of the undoubted right which, in regard to the point in question, is secured to him by the express tenor of the third article of the convention of armistice.

[*Copy.*]

" Que cet armistice ne se concluant que pour laisser le tems, tant à la Cour de Vienne, et à la Porte, qu'à la Cour de Prusse et ses alliés l'Angleterre et la Hollande, d'envoyer du plenipotentiaires au Congrès pour y traiter definitivement de la paix: Et comme il est également de l'intérêt des deux États d'accélérer ce grand ouvrage, on promet de part et d'autre d'y procéder *incessamment*, et de l'achever le *plutôt possible;* et que même pour prévenir tout *dilation quelconque*, on s'engage à la conclure définitivement dans *l'éspace de neuf mois:* de sorte que la presente acte ne sera en vigueur que du jour de sa signature (le 19 Septembre, 1790) jusqu'à la fin du *mois de Mai*, 1791."

The engagement contained in the above article being so precise, your Grace will undoubtedly approve of my supporting the Ottomans in their claim to its rigid accomplishment; if they should think proper to *require* the good offices and intervention of the mediating ministers on this head.

R. M. K.

March 22nd.

My Lord,

A Prussian courier, dispatched from Berlin on the 4th instant, and who left Vienna on the 11th, brought me very interesting letters from both those capitals. Your Grace is already fully informed of the state of public affairs there, which renders superfluous any attempt of mine to throw additional light on them from hence.

All we know is, that the Austrian plenipotentiaries have not received the instructions which have been so long expected, and the Turkish ministers are not only much hurt by such an unaccountable protraction, but begin to conceive suspicions (which the mediating ministers spare no pains to eradicate) that the Court of Vienna has some new plan in view, little consistent with the stipulations of the Reichenbach Convention.

[*Cypher.*]

The Turks are full of anxiety and mistrust, and it must be owned that the conduct of the Austrian ministers here, and of their military men in this neighbourhood, rather tends to strengthen than invalidate such apprehensions. The Ottomans are every day pressing the Prussian minister to hasten the conclusion of peace, as they represent, (and with some reason) that the chief object to them is the recovery of their important provinces, and not the maintenance of a point of honour in the formation of the treaty. The Prussian minister has great difficulty in keeping them quiet till he shall receive his definitive instructions.

By what Mr. Jackson writes me (in utmost confidence) and by what I have drawn from Monsieur Lucchesini, I see reason to believe that Monsieur Hertzberg,* (after holding alternately in his letters to this place, the

* Prime Minister of Prussia.

language of inflexible firmness, and of mild pliability) was, at the departure of this courier, in the humour of yielding many points to the Austrian ministry, and of allowing them to model the definitive treaty according to their own pleasure.

I have told my Prussian colleague (in presence of the Dutch minister) that as I can receive no intermediate orders to alter my language and conduct, I must leave it wholly and solely to him to take possession of the ground which shall be precisely marked out to him in his peremptory instructions. I have declared that I will assist him strenuously in maintaining the whole extent of our preliminary project, if his Court judges that to be proper. But that if he shall have orders to relinquish that ground step by step, I shall (but without committing the honour of my sovereign) do my best to cover his (Monsieur Lucchesini's) retreat, and to render it as becoming as possible. With all this, my lord, it would little surprise me to find that the next letters from Berlin breathe nothing but animosity and indignation against the Court of Vienna.

I am sorry to be forced to beg of your Grace to remark how difficult, as well as painful, my situation must be, amidst so many variations and tergiversations on every side; and I regret most sincerely the necessity of fatiguing your Grace with so many complaints of that mysterious silence of the Court of Vienna, by which the ministers of such respectable Courts are kept in a state of irksome, and in many respects unbecoming, inactivity.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

[It would indeed "fatigue," and to no possible purpose, even the most determined amateur of diplomacy to wade through the continued correspondence, which

(even during this truly "irksome" suspension of all the beneficent objects of his mission) a sense of duty, and the dire necessity of chronicling from post to post, for his principal at home, the revolting inconsistencies, and harassing fluctuations of his colleagues, imposed on the deeply disgusted plenipotentiary of Britain. It has been felt to be due to his memory, and to the honour of England, to unveil at some length, and in his own indignant language, his uneasiness while condemned to breathe an atmosphere of duplicity and intrigue, above which it is pleasing to see this veteran in Courts, but novice in chicane, carrying unsullied his lofty Briton's head. No one, whether initiated, or uninitiated in politics, can have perused thus far without perceiving, that had it rested with our representative, to sweep away by a dozen words of manly straightforward truth, the innumerable subterfuges (whose name we shall hereafter find was "legion"), the Congress of Sistovo (on whose very threshold his able brother diplomatist, Lord Auckland, writes that "being in such good hands as his *for all parties*, it is considered as already settled") instead of dragging on for eight weary months, would have been honourably and satisfactorily terminated in as many days.

The first of the intervals during which, as Sir Robert himself expresses it, his political bark "lay hopelessly aground," may be beguiled by the introduction of one of Lord Auckland's own able and satisfactory letters.—Ed.]

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, March 24th, at night.

My dear Sir,

I shall send this hasty scrawl without scruple, and under flying seal, with Lord Grenville's dispatch to

Mr. Stratton, who will forward it to you. The dispatch is so full that I will not attempt to add anything on the subject to which it relates. It has been a corroding circumstance to my mind to see the procrastination which from every quarter has affected your Sistovo discussions. It was the evident game from the first of the Emperor, and still more of the Imperial ministers, to keep their pacification with the Turks unsettled; and it was therefore our business to finish completely with the Emperor *everywhere*, before we articulate one syllable to Russia.

It is impossible to observe without concern the inconsistent assurances, and unfixed and unsatisfactory language which you have been obliged to report; and which, unhappily, not only for the Austrian Empire, but for Europe, is too much in the style of everything that has happened ever since the Emperor arrived from Florence. Those to whose services he is indebted for such an impression best know their own motives and inducements. But it is beyond any powers of my mind, when I put together many circumstances previous to the Reichenbach Convention, during that convention immediately subsequent to it at Vienna and Florence; and all the circumstances of the Hague negotiation, the details of what is going on in the Netherlands, and all the late accounts from Sistovo, and the versatilities of all your conferences during your present mission—to assign any system to such a conduct that can be stated in terms of due decorum. It appears to be calculated in all its parts for the sole end of creating discontents and fermentation in domestic affairs, and distrust and dissatisfaction in foreign Courts. I know that an Austrian minister, in answer to such a criticism, can in lofty words intimate supreme contempt for the ideas of others, and the most complacent admiration for his own; nevertheless, the opinion of the audience in most theatres is more correct than that of the actors.

It is a good and pleasant pursuit in the transactions of human life, to endeavour to draw good out of evil; and I have strong hopes that the incomprehensible conduct to which I allude will tend to prevent the breaking out of new wars in Europe, and, in its effects, to a general pacification sooner than was expected. I will take occasion to explain this by the first safe conveyance. Meantime, I am quite unhappy for my friend Sir Robert Keith, whose patience must be worn to the bone before the end of this negotiation; of which I see no prospect except in the allusion conveyed in the second paragraph of this scrawl, which I cannot explain further by this channel. I am greatly interested in the accounts from Sistovo, vexatious as they are. Adieu my dear Sir Robert, preserve your health and spirits, and forward me an instrument of pacification by the next messenger at latest.

Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, March 23rd, 1791.

N.B.—Remember I use *black-edged* paper for want of white, as our grandfather Sir James Dick took pyecrust for want of bread.*

My flow of nonsense has been *damm'd up* for these three weeks, my dear sisters, by an unexpected and very vexatious litigation which took place in the Congress; not amongst us, the men of *mediation*, but among those who are the *principal* parties. This caused a reference to Berlin, Vienna, and Constantinople, and as the return of the couriers from *all* those capitals has been unaccountably delayed, we have sat with our arms

* While Provost of Edinburgh, and during a siege of the castle of that city.

across till they are almost *benumbed.* For my part, I have pressed, prayed, and urged, in every quarter; and at this moment I have the best reason to believe that before Sunday next, we shall again display the *olive branch,* and with the fairest hopes of planting it firmly, in three weeks' time. Judge, my dear Anne, how much I (who am not made to burrow four months in a state of *torpor* on a Bulgarian hill) long for a satisfactory conclusion, and a speedy return to my fellow-Christians!

These Turks may be (and I allow they are) good men and true, in point of probity, good faith, and other *unfashionable* virtues; but a *duller* race never vegetated on the face of the earth. They have *drawled* away this last month not in very good humour, but rather in no *humour at all;* and so little bustle or sensation does the presence of these great lords of Turkey make in this poor village, that when we Christians wish to ascertain their *existence,* we must send our dragoman to be eye-witnesses of their smoking each a pipe with their usual energy.

Not an incident or anecdote has enlivened Sistovo, save only a *fire,* which consumed a few Bulgarian huts (which our piastres have helped to rebuild), and a theft committed by a Turkish servant of my mehmandar (you know that means "purveyor"), who was pleased to rob his own master of a gold watch I gave him, and a purse of money, which the mehmandar had, for greater security, deposited in one of his *old boots.* The faithless valet was *discovered,* and ought to have been *hanged* (because he would have let a boy belonging to my washerwoman be hanged upon suspicion if we had not interfered), but was only sent to the gallies. These, my dear Anne, are the only events of my last woeful six weeks!

As to the Turkish inhabitants of this town, my

acquaintance with them is not more intimate than with the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, at whom I have repeatedly stared in the prints of Cook's Voyages. I have been looking out for antiquities and Roman inscriptions. By the help of my trusty companion, and useful assistant in the copying way, Mr. Stuart, I have discovered *several.* One, very curious, indeed, and in perfect preservation, lies in the Greek churchyard, within *ten yards* of the back of my house. It was erected (and probably at a very small distance from the spot where it now is) in the time of the Emperor Adrian, to mark the precise separation between the two great provinces of Mæsia and Thrace. I believe I am a *Thracian at this moment,* and I am glad of it; for both their men and woman had more spirit and game than the vulgar Mæsians. But I send you herewith an exact copy of the inscription,* that you and your Edinburgh *literati* may decide the question.

The weather has been very mild, and the health of the whole Christian colony uninterrupted. I made one excursion on horseback, to see a little of the environs, but I found only some bleak hills on one hand, and some tolerable vineyards on the other. *Nota Bene*—the law of Mahomet against drinking *wine* seems to have lost much of its authority; for though the Turks make as if they shuddered at wine in *public,* many of them will swill to any extent in *private.* This vice was grown to such a height at Constantinople that the Grand Signor thought it, two months ago, a duty of his religion to shut up *all at once* the whole taverns of his capital, to the number of many hundreds. So far *well,* but his Sublimity carried the joke a little too far, for he ordered all the notorious *bibbers* on whom hands could be laid, to be sewed into sacks, and thrown into the sea! Let

* This has unfortunately not been found.

George the Third try his hand at such a bit of legislation, and we should have a pretty uproar.

So much for Turkish sobriety—now for Ottoman courage. It has been a little out at elbows since the beginning of this war, and the Russians were near destroying the last shreds of it. But the massacre of ten or twelve thousand Turkish women and children at Ismail (and above all their fathers and husbands) seems to have awakened the old Saracen spirit, and my new acquaintance, Vizier Jusuf, swears he will have his revenge on these Russian ruffians. And may he have it, soon and completely, say I! I am gladdened with your three letters, dear Anne, since your return to Edinburgh, and rejoice heartily at the tidings of our mutual friends there. I trust that you keep me in the *kind* remembrance of all these good people, and of all my *nears and dears*, for whom my affection is *unutterable*. Tell them they shall have *all* my stories at my return, slowly, circumstantially, and *tediously*, as Eastern tales ought to be told—in the evening of life, over a clear Scotch coal fire. I whisper in your ear that in order to make my personal tale more interesting, I have a plot to watch and waylay my Turkish damsel with the *white hand* so closely, that it shall go hard with me if, before my departure, I cannot speak *pertinently* as to the colour of her *boot* as well as that of her *fist*. And, indeed, my dear Anne, she must thank herself, if I do drive matters to that *extremity*, for all Sistovo knows that she coquetted with me most egregiously the day of my public entry. I have already discovered that she lives upon the *third hill*, to the *left hand* as you look from my window; and that, you know, is a great deal, considering that in the *straight line* of my vision there are only (and I have counted them) *two hundred and seventy-three stone walls* between my charmer and me. But you must have patience, my

dear Anne, for *boot* or *no boot*, I am too much of a gentleman to say a word of the matter till I am out of the continent and turned of seventy.

I am looking out every hour for the return of a messenger whom I dispatched to England in the end of January. Think what a *pleasure* it is, to know that each question I find it necessary to ask *at home*, may be answered within the short space of two calendar months! This is one of the *advantages* of Sistovo; and, indeed, they are numberless.

March 25th.

Well, and hearty, my dear sisters; but out of all patience at the unaccountable protraction of our business; which is to be imputed to the Austrian ministers. We trust, however, that in eight and forty hours they will again be completely rigged out for the joint voyage; and that we shall sail before the wind to our long wished-for—*Porte*.

How glad I shall be to get back to Germany! All my friends at Vienna, young and old, are well. Love to the sisterhood, and aunt Bab, and hearty wishes to all cronies. I embrace your chum, Lady Balcarres, who, from her fine hotel, taunts my Bulgarian hut. Health and content be amongst you all. Adieu, my trusty friend. God bless you, and send us a happy meeting!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, April 10th, 1791.

I WAS ready to *burst* with impatience, six weeks ago, my dear sisters; and by the greatest of all miracles I have not exploded yet, though the retention of ink, on the part of the cabinet of Vienna, leaves us to this hour, full as much in the dark as ever. You plain spinsters have no notion of the delight which Austrian ministers

sometimes take in indulging a sort of dignified *torpor*, which seems to imply—"My *slumbers* are deep politics —my *lead* is worth other people's gold; I will make all the minor politicians of Europe fidget a little—and *then*, my mouth I will ope,

"And out shall fly a *Trope!*"

These sublime enjoyments are above *your* comprehension, and above mine too; but I dare not *own* it; for we plenipos must always make as *if* we understood even the colic of a prime minister. I shrewdly surmise that the Imperial Trope is *coming*, for—but I will spare you, my dear Anne, a host of very *able* conjectures! *I* am well, *Stuart* is well, my heap of servitors, of all colours, kinds, and countries, are well; for Sistovo, though the seat of caliginous dulness, is the healthiest hole in all Ottoman*dam*. I see a *posse* of pewter-looking piastres beginning to be gathered by my maitre d'hotel. I shall not throw them into the Danube (as you, my dear Anne, seem to suspect,) but you will applaud my having no more regard for them than becomes a beggar of the Keith race. Proud poverty! All Bulgaria should not make me renounce it.

My messenger from England (who has surely been set in the *stocks* somewhere, like Lear's gentleman,) must, I dare say, be now galloping towards me on *yonder* plain in Wallachia, and hurrying duly to join me. But, as said plain is some twenty or thirty leagues broad, without hill or hummock, he may gallop there eight and forty hours to come, before he reaches me. I give him a quarter of an hour longer, else—he shall join the Turkish topers in the Bosphorus?

Ordu Cadissi, late Mollah de la Mecque, sends his compliments to you. He is now studying geography to know where the Baltic is, because as how, people are going to send ships of war there. The Reis Effendi

seemed a little incredulous t'other day when I talked of that Baltic's carrying cannon now and then on its bosom. I found vouchers, and at length was credited. They *all* know Gibraltar, and that it is a town in *England;* but, my dear Anne, (it is with grief I own it,) not one of the three Turkish missions, consisting of above an hundred bearded men, had ever so much as *heard* of Scotland! Judge of my mortification, t'other day, when in a moment of *jactation,* I boasted of being born in that illustrious, ancient, and powerful kingdom! I bore that stroke, my dear Anne, as a man and a minister *ought to do!*

The Grand Vizier is driving about the shores of the Danube and Black Sea, instilling courage into his myrmidons; and when he sees any reason to doubt of the effect of his eloquence, he now and then cuts off the head of one or t'other chieftain, which assists the instillation mightily. He will cross the Danube, before *you,* in Princes Street, have the least suspicion of it; and then—have at your Suwaroffs, and Kickeroffs, and Assassinoffs, and all the rest of the Ismail *butchers.* I wish I could see these amiable *Christians* get a hearty drubbing, before I dip my pen for the last time, in the oil of olive.

I must go and dress me, for *mine* is the feast of the day. I must, however, tell you beforehand, that in the course of the last week, I have walked on *my own legs,* at least an hundred and fifty—*yards!* Formerly, I only hopped about from one bar of my cage to the other; I shall re-grow an active man by little and little.

Stuart has been exceedingly busy in collecting a *pretty small* family about him in *his* cage. He is already in possession of two weasels, a land tortoise, and a Danube one; three lizards, a speckled toad, a winged snipe, a lame hare, and he is promised (by a Boyar of Wallachia) to have his comforts completed in a few days, by the addition of two *wolf cubs!* All these go

to bed with him! He is an excellent lad, and will one day do honour to some great monarch as director of his *ménagerie*. *I* am all for the fair *sacks!* and my amour with *white hands* goes on swimmingly!

April 11*th*.

No messenger, which vexes me; but I will amuse you and myself, my dear Anne, by giving you a characteristic trait of the Turkish imagination, which I learned this morning from a German physician, who follows the Congress. A Turkish priest, aged forty and some years, came to him t'other day, complaining of being very *ill*, and thus he explained to the doctor the cause of his illness. "You must know," said the priest, "that above six years and a half ago, as I was coming home in a fine evening, through the streets of this town, a bloody-minded Turk, who owed me a grudge, fired his pistol at me. He happily *missed me*, and as I never saw more of him or his pistol from that day to this, I made light of the whole matter then, and seldom thought of it since. But a month ago, happening to reflect on the danger I then ran, and that I ought to have been deucedly frightened, I have now reasoned myself into that fear which I was foolish enough not to feel when the pistol was fired at me; and I am now sick and miserable in paying the debt of fright which I have so long allowed to be scored up against me."

What say you to that, my dear Anne? This knack of reviving extinct terror is a dangerous prerogative. But I have a mind to try if I can acquire, and render useful, the *reverse* of the priest's nostrum; and while living at Sistovo I am determined to think of some of the pleasantest scenes of my life, some six or ten years ago; and by repassing in idea, all the enjoyment which they *ought* to have afforded me, I will pay, to the last farthing, every debt of rapture, of exquisite feeling, and burning gratitude which any man, woman, or child in

the universe can possibly have scored up against me. No bad thought, my dear Anne; and the sisterhood, and all my old cronies, and my dear creatures, and my benefactors, and even my flirtations, shall have twenty shillings in the pound, I promise you. Adieu,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, April 27th, 1791.

So, my dear Anne, it is your will and pleasure that I should write over again from memory, my nonsensical letter of the 2nd December, which was turned to some ignoble use by an Austrian corporal! Why truly this mandate of yours is something in the Russian style, *exceedingly barbarous*, and next to impossible. But as our political bark is still lying *on her side*, on the sand-bank of Austrian stubbornness, I will do my best to tack together, once more, such small remnants of recollection as the little occurrences of that date have imprinted on a waste leaf of my memory. First then, a happy *rencontre*.

You must know, then, that many of my servitors left Vienna long before me, being to glide down the Danube, with my heavy baggage, in a large covered bark. We had been separated *two-and-thirty days*, and I knew no more about *them* than the man in the moon, when — and here I deplore the loss of my quondam description—at three leagues distance down the river, from the famous fortress of Orsova, and immediately below the tremendous cataracts of the Danube, at the close of day, and on a charming meadow, fast by the river side, I spied my faithful lords of the pantry, kitchen, and confectionery, Duretti, Manzone, and Kaucksdorff, dancing with joy at the approach of their laughing lord! The inferior menials, who were in the *suite* of my courtiers, did not *presume*

to dance, nor to be vociferous in their congratulations; but they grinned delight, and grunted hilarity, in a very moving manner. These good people, finding their master well, and judging that a dish of warm tea, and a thin slice of bread and butter, might have their charms on the borders of Wallachia (as they used to have at Vienna) had all these materials of enjoyment, ready *cut and dried*—a very proper expression for a basin of tea!—and after this romantic regale, we parted, with mutual embraces, to meet no more till Sistovo.

In a quarter of an hour from thence, we entered into the fertile and fleeced province of Wallachia, and in ten minutes more, we were up to the neck in *mud and mire*, and were dragged through thick and thin for three or four miles; which was performed upon us by all manner of animals; and, in three or four hours time, we reached the human *warren* called the town of Czernetz. I call it "warren," my dear Anne, because the Wallachians are too fond of mother Earth to content themselves with *living on her lap;* but choose to dig their habitations in her *bowels.* Stout carcases, adorned with rags and despondency, distinguished the common people, and long silken robes, with whiskered faces, and sly servility, marked the abject pre-eminence of four or five Boyars, (noblemen) who had wooden booths by way of palaces, in town: and who, in better times looked down with pride from their *stately galleries* before their houses (ten planks of fir deal, supported by six tottering posts) on these miserable ragamuffins of dependents who *burrowed* around them.

With one of these Boyars I lodged, and exchanged six phrases of my Ciceronian learning against five words of his dog Latin. I found I was a considerable loser by the bargain, and sent his Boyarship *to his bed!* So much for itinerary details—now for Trajan's bridge.

Was it built near Czernetz? Was it built of stone?

Was it built at all? These are three questions about which the learned are divided; but in regard to all three I boldly answer in the affirmative. The Severiner Tower is a massive stout stone building, almost quite entire, between seventy and eighty feet high; and placed there for the defence of the bridge, on the Wallachian side (then called Dacia), against those barbarians. This I *saw* from my windows, and can attest. The miserable deep roads, and the hope of passing that way on my return, and in fine weather, prevented my wading down to the shore *that day*, but my servants, who in their boat passed the place itself (and had my orders to open all their eyes to see distinctly) saw the two stone abutments of the bridge in full preservation. They are about thirty feet high above the water, and are built of large square stones, but without *any* inscription. Universal tradition has convinced every inhabitant of the country that *there* stood *Trajan's*, and *not* Constantine's bridge; for that a *bridge* stood there is incontrovertible. Remains of the piers have been seen at low water, and the Emperor Charles the Sixth had a large wooden pile drawn out of the water at that place, which had already acquired a thin coat of petrifaction. There are models of Trajan's bridge extant; they make the piers *stone*, with a wooden superstructure. Be that as it may, the erection must have been a bold one, for the Danube is there very *deep*, very *rapid*, and four hundred and fifty toises in breadth.

There was another bridge over the Danube, below Nicopolis, at five leagues' distance from hence, where the river Aluta falls into the Danube. Of this one, hardly any vestiges remain; but this second bridge I suppose to be that of Constantine. Heigh ho! my dear Anne, I am quite exhausted with this explosion of *pontifical* literature. I hope I have *be-bridged* you to your heart's content!

Now, to finish my rakings from the embers of my memory, in regard to my *former* lucubration (which lighted the corporal's pipe instead of finding its way to Princes Street) methinks I told you that the Wallachian jargon at once salutes the ear with such a Roman twang that no man who has studied Ruddiman's Grammar can doubt of their descent (with many mongrel and probably Scythian crosses in the breed) from the proud sovereigns of the world. "A handsome woman," is "formousa mugera;" "I do not understand you, sir," is "no cape domno." In short, they know no other name for their nation but "Rumagni;" and the devil is in it if their genealogy be doubtful. But if the stately Romans could look up and see to what a dastardly race their progeny have been reduced, by Hun, Goth, Scythian, and lastly, Greek bondage, they would spit upon them with scorn. I looked amongst the wretches who ran alongside of my carriage to prevent its being overturned, for Roman features. I thought I saw some Othos, and now and then a Galba; but not a line of a republican countenance to be seen among them! But enough—as this is not my *present* letter, but my *old* letter, I will begin the other on a new sheet.

Having finished, on this blessed 27th of April, my letter to you of the 2nd of last December, I have only one request to make to you, my dear Anne, and for heaven's sake, not to command me to write any more of my nonsense *over again*, for notwithstanding the complete idleness in which I find myself at this *benumbed* Congress, it is the hardest work I ever attempted in my life. My chit-chat may be somewhat palatable at the first seething, but it must be mawkish enough at the second heating. Now that I find myself writing my *present* letter, I feel quite another man, and that you shall see.

This country, I pronounce, is not worth living in, because, I will venture to affirm, that there is not one

ounce of *genuine love* to be found in the whole extent of Bulgaria. Now, my dear friend, you know that from my cradle upwards, I am Theodosius the Second, "All for love, or the world well lost." I have looked every Turkish man whom I have met deep into the eye, (their ladies I have taken in a different point of view,) and I have not discovered a single ray of that sensibility which melts men's hearts (without impairing in the least their manly courage) into that species of tender cullibility which marries the minds as well as the bodies of the two sexes; and by the happy transfer of authority from the strong to the weak, renders every handsome wife, in our hen-pecked (and consequently blessed) Christendom, the despotic sovereign of her domestic domain. These Mussulmen are made of iron—cold, and rusty iron—they will not bend to happiness; and woman, sweet woman, (that dear, queer, irresistible, and unriddle-able divinity) in their estimation, of little more value or animation than a leg of mutton! I have proved to you on former occasions, my dear Anne, that the Ottoman empire cannot stand long. You are *now* convinced that with such men and women in it, it does not signify a button if it should tumble to shivers to-morrow. I am quite of your mind, in a moral and physical (though not in a *political*) light, and my third observation shall prove why the rulers of cabinets must keep it *on its legs* as long as they can.

If Turkey could tumble *into the sea*, good and well. But, alas! the case is quite otherwise. Every bit that crumbles from its consistency falls into the clutches of a certain northern dame, who has lately fallen into an ugly habit of slaughtering the human race by twenty and thirty thousand at a time, and only for the pleasure of filling a page in a newspaper. I am bold to say, that if we allowed that lady to proceed westward, with the same humane propensities, and an

unconquerable thirst of acquisition, she might at length, become a troublesome neighbour to some of our Christian princes, who are weak enough to think extirpation but a poor amusement. *Ergo*—Selim the Third is to be supported on his sublime sofa; and it has been very properly determined that the said carnivorous lady shall be prevailed upon to make a few retrograde steps into her quondam boundaries. The Ottomans are to be left to *dwindle down* in their own dull way, whilst her ladyship will be at full liberty to cut and carve her native subjects in the manner best suited to her stout appetite.

Thus, my dear Anne, I have enlightened you on a variety of subjects, and in such a manner that you may (and doubtless will) flash Bulgarian information on the minds of all your choice cronies. It only remains for me to request of you to tell their daughters and nieces (for your cronies themselves are somewhat stricken in years) that there is a great man of your kindred, a knight, and privy-councillor, who, with all the bloom of threescore, the wealth of a Keith, and the vivacity of a ripe plenipo, has a formal promise from the Grand Turk to be made a two-tailed pacha (if not a *three*) in the month of June; and who means next year, about the fall of the leaf, to select to himself a pacha-ess, amongst the meekest, mildest, and modestest misses of Caledonia. I foresee, my dear sister, that the throng of candidate damsels will be very great; should it be *enormous*—why tell them for their comfort, that I can obtain from my friend, the mufti, a valid licence (and I speak it not rashly) to bring on my board every day, *three* legs of matrimonial mutton instead of one. Such are the privileges *entailed* on a successful negotiator in the Ottoman empire!

Perhaps you are curious to learn some of those domestic occurrences which peculiarly mark my living and amusements here. Know then, that my principal

court-yard, containing seventeen feet in length, by eleven and a half in breadth, has, by the united labours of my old and trusty servants, been lately *tortured* into what they are pleased to call an *English garden*. In the above space, with the assistance of two stunted apple trees and one apricot ditto, together with a ragged vine, and three rose bushes, they have furnished me serpentine walks, shady arbours, with a due proportion of lawn and shrubbery.

The great difficulty was—with what to *sow* my garden; as no seed whatsoever was to be found here. These good people at length discovered *two pounds* of mustard-seed in the hands of a Greek merchant: they have sowed the whole premises with that seed, and I trust that with incessant industry, and the fine *growing rains* we have had of late, I shall have as fine a crop of mustard-seed as any *landholder* in Bulgaria! My second gardener, Mr. Jack Ferguson, thanks you kindly for inquiring into his parentage and education. His sire (a lame barber in London) yielded to me this, his only son, as valet-de-chambre, in his *tenth* year, and as he has only served me for *nineteen*, he is the *last come* servant (save one) in my numerous household. We grow old and keep merry *all together*.

April 29*th*.

If any body asks you, my dear Anne, the state of politics here, and that of my personal welfare, you may show them the enclosed beautiful poem, which, I flatter myself, will prove two things. First, that Ovid, who bore his exile in this country in so *dastardly* a manner, was a dirty fellow in comparison with your brother; and, secondly, that the Roman poet did not understand Hugo Grotius half so well as I do.

Adieu, my dear sisters; distribute my kisses and compliments in manner due to all my kindred and cronies, *et vive la Bagatelle!* Adieu.

R. M. K.

A COPY OF VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE HUMDRUM CONGRESS.

BY A GREAT NEGOTIATOR.

I HEAR it affirmed both by friend and by foe,
That happiness cannot be found here below;
And that to attain it, each mortal must go
With fear and with faith, through the wicket *la haut.*
I boldly assert that the thing is not so,
Since perfect felicity, as I well know,
Is quiet vegetation, as cabbages grow—
With a stomach of iron, and a conscience like snow;
Digesting a peace, and digesting it slow,
That each pithy word may be placed *àpropos*,
In the form of a fence, or a palisade—o
Round the *sine quâ non*, and strict *status quo*.

Thus bless'd *above all*, is the sage Plenipo,
Who scribbles gay nonsense, from dull *Sistovo!*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, May 15th, 1791.

OUR political bark, after lying three months on her broadside, is again righted, and happily, my dear Anne, her *bottom* has not suffered in the least. We are now fairly *afloat*, and as soon as the rigging is overhauled, and our provisions put in order, we shall set sail for our blessed harbour, which we shall *certainly reach* in three or four weeks' time. The whole crew is now in good spirits, and the remainder of the voyage will be pleasant and prosperous. Metaphor apart—we *shall* conclude on the 11th of June (when the armistice ends) and our next object must be to *hasten* the exchange of ratifications between the contracting parties, so that we may clench every nail in the edifice, and depart from hence, with *joy and honour*, as soon as we possibly can. It has been a hard and irksome piece of work, my dear Anne,

but when *Te Deum* is once sung for its creditable conclusion, I shall think all the painful part of my public labours fairly at an end. Our poor Turkish colleagues have felt their heads sit *loose* on their shoulders for the last two months; but the exhilarating and positive assurances we gave them two days ago, have nailed their *noddles* fast again!

How glad I shall be to quit this inhospitable country! which, however, has one excellent quality, that of a wholesome climate. It will be a comfort to me, and I hope an honour, to the end of my days, to have made this strange campaign in politics; and every enjoyment in Christendom will have a double relish from my having passed a winter in a *wooden cage* on a rock in Bulgaria.

I have not yet spoken a *word* to a native of Sistovo, but Stuart (who is an excellent political apprentice, and at the same time a top-hand at making ducks and drakes upon the Danube) assures me that the Turkish boys are extremely *polite* in bringing him flat stones to pursue that favourite amusement. They even permit the said Squire Stuart, and a certain Jack Ferguson, a servitor in my train, to shoot the sparrows in their hedges with all manner of *debonnairity*. Those two traits of the national character of the Mussulmen will have their weight with a damsel of your penetration, and I dare say that you will conclude from thence that a Turkish *laddie* is very like a Scotch *laddie*, bating the *breeks* and the bonnet. Your conclusion is just, my dear Anne, but, as to their women!—I defy any part of the world to produce such "worricows." *

You must know, my dear sister, that I have, from my *hobble-dehoyship* upwards, been reckoned a tolerable connoisseur in female beauty; and as such I promised

* *Anglicé*, scarecrows.

to display my skill among these Mussul-women. But in order to describe a race of women, I hold it to be a necessary point either to see a few inches of their flesh, or to have a glimpse of their features. Not a hair's-breadth beyond the eye, and the rest of the sack may be filled with alabaster or Newcastle coal, for aught I know. I have told you this before, I believe, but it goes to my heart, and I cannot complain of it too often! As to speech, they have no need of it, for they speak to nobody but their husbands, and what the deuce can they have to say, who have *no ideas?*

I figure to myself a *happy* Turkish couple who have reposed together on one sofa for a dozen years, and worn to very rags their *shreds* of passion, and *crumbs* of conversation, as the consummation of human misery! Not even a chance of strife between them. For I defy the cleverest woman in Turkey to keep up a quarrel with her tyrant even for half an hour, as she has nobody but himself to complain of, or to complain *to*, and is a total stranger to all the degrees of comparison! But I lose my temper; and that is unbecoming in a mediating minister. Therefore no more about those *dowdies;* they are the most untempting females that ever I did—*not* see! Now for a short chapter about *self.*

I am as well as your Tron Kirk with its new coat on. I am as cheerful as any man can be, who sees from his window the desolated plains of Wallachia, and in his court-yard the Janissaries of despotism. By-the-by, these Janissaries are good conditioned sort of gentry, and agree extremely well with *all* my people; nay, though they are grave men, and whiskered men, I saw them t'other day *condescend* to engage with my footman in an *amicable* battle with *snow-balls;* when Turkish turbans, and Christian hats, were alternately smitten to the ground with great dexterity.

There is a serjeant of the Janissaries, a Saracen Turk, of portly stature, and solemn demeanour, who has not smiled these twenty years, and may one day be *Grand Vizier*, for aught that I know. He is a man of authority, who has all the tediousness of an emperor. Yet (we are all *frail*) I saw his serjeantship t'other morning, enjoying a little childish pastime in endeavouring to smother in the snow a poor rat, who had escaped from one of my confectioner's *sweet boxes*.

You see, my dear Anne, how well I describe the Turkish manners and government in furnishing you with "the secrets of the Ottoman empire laid bare to the meanest capacity." I forgot to tell you one important remark I have made, which is that the custom of seeing an old *cobbler* very busy at the corner of every street, is Turkish, as well as Christian; whence you may draw an hypothesis upon the universality of all good customs. The custom, however, of glass to your windows, beds for your bodies, shirts to your backs, or any other instrument for eating (*save fingers*) have not yet reached Bulgaria. They are yet unknown to the *Waiwode!* of whom it is proper you should know, in the first place, that he *farms* this town from the reigning Sultan's third sister, *Hatigé* Sultana, (that's the lady's name,) and pays her ten thousand pounds sterling per annum for pin-money, and the privilege of *fleecing* the inhabitants. I fancy that his worship shears them to the *quick*, and therefore I tell you secondly, (and for your comfort,) that he is dying of dropsy! But alas! another *Waiwode* will *buy them* of our friend *Hatigé*, and shorn they will be, to the *end of the chapter*.

You are so much of a Mahometan, my dear Anne, as to be perfectly acquainted with the penitential moon of Ramazan, in the midst of which we now are. No Mussulman can, during this month, either eat, drink, or smoke tobacco, whilst the sun is above the horizon;

nay, the abstinence is so rigid, that a Turk dare not wet his parched throat by swallowing his spittle. To encounter these castigations manfully (and particularly the privation of the *pipe*, which to them is the worst of all,) our friends, the plenipotentiaries, have adopted the sage resolution of *sleeping* all day, and indulging their appetites in the night. However, such is the *public spirit* of their Excellencies, that on our proposing to them the renewal of the general conferences, they *nobly* offered to face the *abstemious sun* from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon, three days in every week! You may therefore, my dear sisters, lay your account with our being at the eve of our *signature* by the time this letter reaches Princes Street.

In the mean time, let the newspapers amuse themselves as they have hitherto done, with forging a number of idle tales about our Congress, which, indeed, never had, nor will have, its *fellow*.

Amongst the oddities of it, there is *one* which I must mention. We are (including Turks) eight ministers—men of expense, full of money and of health, and we shall soon have ended our sixth month of residence in Bulgaria; during all which time not one of us has ever set his foot in *coach*, *chaise*, or carriage of *any sort*. Such a *pedestrian* Congress never existed in the annals of modern history!

We have been fed from Vienna, Hermanstadt in Transylvania, Bucharest, and Constantinople; this town producing little else than excellent water and good fish. Our wines have been from all the kingdoms of Europe; our pheasants from Hungary, our capons from Styria, our oranges and lemons from the Islands of Scio and Naxos; and to crown all our *Lucullan* luxury—the King of Naples once sent us a piece of *roasted veal* (true, my dear Anne, though very like a monstrous lie!) from Sorrento, in the neighbourhood

of Naples.* Ay—and the veal arrived as sweet and good as ever was tasted! You, my dear Anne, have read this paragraph to half a score of your cronies, and not one of them believes it; why, let them come to Sistovo, if they dare,—or go to Sorrento—if they prefer it—to convict me!

But since I am in the humour of telling you marvels, here goes another. We are about a hundred Christians here, (I mean *real* not Greek Christians) and there are five and twenty thousand Turkish inhabitants in Sistovo. Now I pawn my credit, that no one man of us ever held one minute's conversation, or had the smallest grain of social intercourse, with a single *Sistovite*, male or female. The fair *sacks* are now become *brownish* in their garments, instead of jet black. But if any one of us or our attendants dares to boast of having seen with his own eyes, the first hair's-breadth of a Mussulwoman's *nose*, I brand him to the public as a vain-glorious vaunter. A more decorous Congress, therefore, than this has been, the world never saw.

You, my dear Anne, have a few valuable acquaintances in this town, and you will expect some particulars concerning them. The amiable gentleman who stole my Mehmandar's watch and purse, is now chained to a wheelbarrow at Widdin; and your dropsical admirer, the quondam Waiwode, is gone on a visit to the Grand Vizier. You will recollect that I told you, that in proportion as the tympany increased in the carcase of his Waiwodeship, his purse swelled at a monstrous rate by the heavy exactions squeezed from the poor Sistovites. The Grand Vizier (being probably determined to free the Waiwode from both these incumbrances at once) had the goodness to insist on his going to pass a few days in his camp, where both the tappings are now

* What would Sir R. M. Keith's *Maitre d' Hôtel* have thought of salmon and grouse arriving in prime order in the East Indies?

performing, and I will answer for the success of the *pecuniary* evacuation. My *love* with the white hand has been sent on a pilgrimage to Mecca, to save her from the danger of our mutual passion: which indeed had risen to a most perilous height, especially on *her side*. My faithful Achates, the Honourable Captain William Stuart, desires his love to you. His young wolves have devoured his favourite falcon, and two of his tortoises; his pet fox plays like a kitten, and now and then breakfasts on one of my chickens. His Turkish horse does not run away with him above twice a week. His *chum*, Mehemet, (one of my Janissaries) having gone to the wars, he has taken mightily, of late, to another of these warriors, who is constantly about the house, and who is as proper looking an Ottoman as one can wish to see. Jack Ferguson has purchased a deadly Turkish gun, with which he has slain three—sparrows! and, in short, my dear Anne, we have all been keenly active, every one *in his way*.

May 17th.

My preceding sheet of my own *Keith nonsense* being happily filled with hardly a dash of politics, I am not fool enough to engage this morning in a detail of changes in England, with which you are acquainted two months ere they can reach me. With the assurance (in confidence) that I can be *no loser* by *any* of them, I bid you heartily adieu!

R. M. K.

Huzzah! great joy on Bessy ——'s son and heir! Your letter just arrived.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistova, May 13*th.*

My Lord,

I am to acknowledge the receipt of your Grace's dispatch, No. 2,* giving me notice that the instrument of his Majesty's full power, containing the Emperor's *title,* had been sent by a messenger to Vienna. Mr. Stratton has duly forwarded it to me by a Prussian courier.

I flatter myself that your Grace's instructions will soon be conveyed to me, relative to the various difficulties which have been started during the course of this negotiation: in regard to which my conduct must necessarily be regulated by the King's commands.

Without troubling your Grace with a recapitulation of all these points, I beg leave to observe that the form and tenor of the future treaty, comprehending an acknowledgment of the Reichenbach Convention as its *basis,* or wholly omitting that acknowledgment; and likewise the King's determination to grant, in *whole or in part,* his guarantee of the said treaty, or to refuse that sanction entirely, are matters of so great importance, that a decision concerning them cannot possibly be supposed to rest in my breast.

My eager impatience to receive these instructions is redoubled by the notification made to us yesterday, by the Austrian ministers, that our business will be resumed in a few days, and will probably be carried on with expedition. Whilst I remain deprived of those

* This No. of itself (the dispatch it alludes to being one of *mere form*) will show, that whether from the indolent apathy which had so long prevailed regarding foreign politics, or the more honourable motive of confidence in a long tried servant of the Crown, Sir R. M. Keith had been left from December to May, without one line from his principal, to direct him in an intricate and important negotiation.

orders which ought alone to guide my conduct in this weighty business, my situation must be *exceedingly distressing*. Should it unfortunately happen that the King's commands do not come to my hands before the renewal of the general conferences, I have already taken the liberty of informing your Grace (in my preceding letters) that in order to prevent a prolongation of this negotiation, which it is the general interest to bring to a speedy conclusion, I shall conform myself to the measures prescribed by his Prussian majesty to his minister here, in consequence of the explanation and compromise which have taken place between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin.

In pursuing such a line of conduct, I should hope to stand perfectly justified in the eyes of my superiors. But, my lord, there exists one point in which I find myself *obliged* to maintain a direct opposition to the sentiments of my Prussian colleague here, who assures me he has orders to insist peremptorily on an equality of precedence between his sovereign and the King of Great Britain.

In my letters of the 21*st December*, 1790, and the 25th of last March, I made it my earnest request of your Grace to be honoured with the King's commands for the *admission* or *rejection* of that claim, but am still without any answer. Through the kindness of Lord Auckland I am *now* informed that Count Keller, who had set up the same pretensions at the Hague, had thought proper to *withdraw it;* and that, consequently, the precedent Marquis Lucchesini had endeavoured to establish, and to which (as prescribed by your Grace) I should have cheerfully conformed, as a fresh proof of the King's friendship for his Prussian Majesty, is unwarranted.

I shall be extremely sorry if this point (should your Grace's instructions not arrive before the signature) should create at that period, any difficulty, by the

Prussian minister persisting in a claim, in regard to which it can in *no shape* depend on *me* to depart, even in the smallest degree, from an incontrovertible example, so recently set to us *both* at the Hague.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistova, May 19th, 1791.

My Lord,

I had yesterday the honour to receive your lordship's dispatch of the 22nd April, acquainting me that his Majesty had been pleased, upon the resignation of the Duke of Leeds, to intrust the seals of the department for Foreign Affairs to your lordship.

I beg leave to congratulate your lordship on this new proof of his Majesty's favour and confidence. I shall continue to endeavour, by my assiduous zeal for the advancement of the King's service, and punctual adherence to your lordship's instructions, to show myself deserving of your good opinion; and it will be matter of infinite satisfaction to me to be speedily favoured with those orders which are indispensably necessary for my guidance and direction in the present negotiation.

The Austrian minister acquainted us yesterday that they should be ready to meet the Turkish plenipotentiaries on Thursday next, in Congress, and they invited us (the mediating ministers) to a previous and separate conference on Wednesday. From the language held to us by the Imperial ministries (since the arrival of their instructions from Vienna) we have the best reason to believe that they are charged to carry on our negotiation in an amicable and expeditious manner; and their personal dispositions appear to correspond

perfectly with these directions. We take it for granted that the substance of the definitive treaty which they are authorised to propose in Congress, will be strictly consonant to the spirit (and even letter) of the Convention of Reichenbach. The only points on which we presage some difficulty, are the length of time they mean to allow for the exchange of ratifications: and (as the Prussian letters from Vienna hint) a subsequent term of *two months* for the evacuation of Wallachia, &c. It may easily be conceived that the interests of the Porte will naturally induce plenipotentiaries to employ their utmost efforts to shorten the duration of both.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, May 19th, 1791.

My Lord,

In the conference yesterday between the mediating ministers and those of Vienna, Baron Haeften made known to us that in pursuance of the orders sent to him and his colleague from Vienna, he would in the general meeting of the Congress (as this day) read to the mediators in French, and to the Ottomans in the Turkish language, the whole of the proposed treaty, containing eighteen articles, such as it had been sent to them. That he wished to put the Ottomans in complete possession of the entire treaty *at once;* that their remarks, their possible objections, or unreserved acquiescence, might be the result of complete information. The mediators joined with the Imperialists in opinion that the communication of the entire treaty in the first place, would greatly facilitate the sequel of the negotiation. But they thought it, however,

necessary to stipulate that the silence of the Ottoman plenipotentiaries between the reading of each article, should in no shape be construed as an approbation or acquiescence on their part; and that the agreement to hear the whole treaty to an end at *one sitting*, should not impair in the smallest degree, their unquestionable right of debating, impugning, or finally rejecting, any one of the articles which should seem to them inadmissible. This point being agreed to on the part of the Austrian minister, we gave the Ottomans *precise* information of our previous *reserve in their favour*, of every possible right pertaining to their ministerial character.

The Congress met this morning, and the whole treaty, of which I send your lordship inclosed a *complete* and *authentic* copy, was read, article by article, in French and in Turkish. The Ottomans made no observations whatever on its contents, but declared they would take them into consideration, and give notice to the mediators when they should be ready again to meet them in Congress.

The treaty, my lord, contains *much new matter*, but I shall not presume to make any hasty commentary on it. Your lordship will judge in how far its tenor requires the *most speedy* conveyance of directions and instructions to *me*. Should they, unhappily, not arrive before the time at which the signature of peace may appear to his Prussian Majesty *absolutely necessary for the good of the common cause*, I am confident that your lordship will think me perfectly justifiable in regulating my conduct by the directions which that monarch shall send to his minister here; provided they do not contradict my *original*, and hitherto *sole* instructions. But even in this case, of my being obliged to sign the treaty without any new order from your lordship, I shall hold it my duty to sign, as mediator, *sub spe rati*.

After the Turks had left the Congress chamber, we remarked to Baron Herbert that in the eighteenth article, no sort of mention was made of the future ratifications of the mediating powers, or their exchange, as had been the practice in *all* treaties, even where no guarantee was granted. Baron Herbert said, that in his orders from Vienna that point was wholly omitted. That he would therefore transmit this day to Prince Kaunitz the very proper remark we had made, and expect by *return of post* the Prince's answer.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, May 20th.

My Lord,

The messenger Shaw delivered into my hands at eleven o'clock last night your lordship's dispatch No. 3, which, I presume, ought to have been marked No. 2, as I have received* no official dispatch since your No. 1, dated on the 22nd April. I feel myself essentially indebted to your lordship for the very clear and ample instructions which that dispatch contains; and you may rely on my exerting the utmost efforts of zeal and assiduity in pursuing the important objects which they give me in charge.

I must crave your lordship's indulgence for confining myself, by this day's post, to the bare acknowledgment of these directions, as it will be necessary for me to have more than one conversation with my colleagues in the mediation, before I can collect such lights in

* It is impossible to avoid contrasting the *three dispatches* within as many weeks (and those too immediately on entering upon a new and extensive office), of Sir R. M. K.'s "new principal"—with the *none in five months* of his predecessor.

respect to the actual sentiments of their Courts, and the tenor of their *latest* orders, as can enable me to lay before your lordship a fair state of the means to be employed, and of the degree of co-operation I have to expect from these ministers, in carrying the King's orders into effect. I am in hopes that in a day or two, a messenger from Berlin will bring to my Prussian colleague fresh instructions, in consequence of Mr. Ewart's commission; as also letters to me from that gentleman, with such information relative to the *present* wishes of the Prussian Cabinet as will be of great advantage to me. In the meantime I enclose to your lordship a copy (sent to me by Monsieur Lucchesini, not an hour ago) of Prince Kaunitz's dispatch to Prince Reuss; and your lordship will see what a *wide field* for debate and negotiation may be laid open to it, should Prussia adopt it, as the ground-work of a claim to *equivalent compensation.*

[Human patience (at least as dealt out to any, save mediating ministers) would fail in pursuing, as well as any, save diplomatic slaves of the lamp, would shrink from tracing the windings of that maze of novel subtleties in which Austrian chicane sought, in the renewed conferences, to entangle the dogged, but far more honest disciples of Mahomet. And when the object of these manœuvres, worthy of the Jesuit-education of their author, is seen to be some petty deviation in the proposed line of frontier between the empires, a matter of "sport," or at least little moment, to the Emperor, while its concession might have been "death" to the poor trembling Turkish negotiators—their new-born firmness (the result of desperation) and the care of the mediators not to see them over-reached, while the faith of their own Courts was pledged for fair and equal dealing, can alone reconcile any one to the details of *days* of dismal litigation, the salient points of which

(in justice to one doomed, as best he might, to *sit them out*) must be very briefly given.—Ed.]

On May 23rd, Sir R. M. Keith thus writes:—

"The Turks are preparing a *strong protest* against the Austrian claims beyond the *status quo*, and think *that the safety of their heads* depends on bringing it forward, even before they receive first orders from the Sultan. Your lordship will see (from Sir Robert Ainslie's dispatches) how very averse the Porte is to any prolongation of the armistice. My Prussian colleague is not less so." [On May 24th a fresh combustible was cast into Congress by a supposed infraction of *neutrality* on the part of a Turkish commander, which cost the mediators an express and remonstrance to Constantinople, and was of course made the most of by the Austrians.

This point settled, by a strong disclaimer on their part of all ideas of clandestine hostility, the Turks entered on a manly and nearly unanswerable repudiation of the new stipulations of the proposed treaty.] "This gave rise," says Sir Robert, "to a long and sharp altercation; and Baron Herbert entered on an artful but feeble and prolix deduction of what he termed the just foundation of those claims. All this was drawn out to immoderate length, and more than over-balanced by observations (not very apposite) from Count Esterhazy."

[Nor would even its brief and masterly summary, however necessarily inflicted on Lord Grenville, at all interest even the political reader. After many a rejoinder, and many a digression, from which the mediators had all the trouble in the world in bringing the parties back, they were requested by the Turks to give *their* opinion as to the compatibility of the Austrian demands with the principle of the strict *status quo*.]

"The mediators, however," adds Sir Robert, with his usual wisdom and temper, "thinking that after a sitting

of four hours, and whilst the minds of the ministers of the contracting parties were *not a little heated*, a further discussion to which this answer must necessarily give rise, would be little conducive to the main object of conciliation, desired time to compare the treaties in question, and to weigh the arguments on both sides before they gave an answer."

It will not be wondered that the very letter of May 29th (acknowledging the receipt of *another dispatch*) contains this *bit of cypher*:—

"I find it a difficult task to prevent misunderstandings; but I shall exert every effort *in my power* to prevent the negotiation being *again suspended*."

On the 30th, Sir Robert thus reports—

"The mediating ministers, having *jointly* drawn up a *written* answer (of which I send a copy,) to the reference made to us by the Ottoman ministers, we thought it highly expedient to hold a short conference on Saturday with the Austrians, previous to the meeting in Congress. We sought the opportunity of employing our good offices, and the most persuasive arguments we were masters of, in the language of friendly expostulation to engage those ministers to adhere, much more strictly than they had done in the minute of the proposed treaty, to the *status quo ante bellum*, which the Turks had adopted (under a convention guaranteed by our three Courts as the rigid measure of reciprocal restitution, and renewal of all antecedent engagements."

Then follow the technical arguments, unintelligible without maps, and of the most merely *local* interest, yet conclusive, in their manly straightforwardness, to the meanest capacity.

"To these reasonings," continues Sir Robert, "Baron Herbert opposed nothing, I am sorry to be under the necessity of declaring—but the most flimsy and ill-grounded subterfuges; and these too, urged with a

degree of intemperate heat, both in expression and manner, which little became his ministerial functions. The mediators made to those futile and acrimonious allegations, the calm and dignified reply which they called forth. To put a stop to such unsuitable proceedings, I thought proper to show that the *note verbale* of Prince Reuss, and the answer delivered to it by the Court of Berlin, had fixed, by mutual agreement, the *status quo ante bellum*, as the *sole* rule here, in respect to *restitution*."

When Baron Herbert had read both these papers, (as given him by Count Lucchesini,) he said, (and I am desirous even to soften his expressions) "that no ministerial offices between his Court and Prussia, nor any arguments deduced by the mediation, could have weight in his opinion, or influence on his conduct! That he and his colleague (who had maintained a perfect silence) acted under special and unalterable orders from their Court, and that they would not proceed to the article of restitution of conquests, till their demands, (being a *sine quâ non* of the conclusion so much wished for) should be granted." Our conference thus ended without the smallest effect.

The mediators, being resolved to fulfil, without exception, every duty of their conciliatory functions, held a separate conference with the Ottomans, immediately after. We communicated to them the ill success of our conversation with the Austrians, and recommended them to take into consideration the situation of their affairs, together with the *very* short duration of the armistice; in order to have their answer prepared to the positive language they would soon hear employed in the Congress chamber, by the Imperial plenipotentiaries.

The Turks expressed surprise and concern, but showed a considerable degree of firmness. They said they would *hear* the Austrians, and draw from the peremptory

declaration they had expressed themselves ready to make *in writing*, what they might have to send to the Grand Vizier, and to the Porte; but that they would offer no reply in the approaching general conference.

It passed, of course, in useless *reiteration* on Baron Herbert's part, of "not receding a *hair's breadth*," and in silence on that of the Turks—while the mediator concludes his dispatch. "Such, my lord, is the state of our negotiation, which is drawing very fast to a decisive crisis."

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, May 30th.

My Lord,

In obedience to the very ample instructions which have been forwarded to me from Berlin by a Prussian courier, I have concerted everything with my Prussian colleague, in exact conformity to the directions which have been sent to us *in common*. I shall send back Sir Robert Ainslie's janissary the day after to-morrow to Constantinople, with Mr. Ewart's letter to his Excellency, accompanied with all the lights which my pen can throw on the subjects in question. I venture to assure your lordship that the utmost circumspection as well as diligence, will be employed by Marquis Lucchesini and me in pursuance of every object which we have in charge. We agree perfectly in opinion, both in regard to these matters themselves and to the most proper manner of treating them. It has been at the earnest request of that minister that I have deferred the proposal in Congress, of a short prolongation of the suspension of arms. We received by courier, on Friday night, explicit orders from his Prussian Majesty, to declare, in the name of that monarch, that he has the

firmest reliance on the Emperor's promise to restore *all* his conquests, *without exception;* and he therefore expects and requires the most rigid adherence to the principles of the *status quo ante bellum.* This instruction, which my Prussian colleague intends to fulfil to-morrow (but with as little harshness as possible), will drive the Austrians to the necessity of yielding, or of asking time to obtain fresh orders from Vienna. In the latter case, the proposal of a prolongation must come from them; and the blame of a new protraction will lie solely at their door.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

[*By Prussian Messenger.*]

Sistovo, June 4th, 1791.

My Lord,

I have reserved for this conveyance of a Prussian messenger the report of what has passed here in the last few days. On Wednesday, Marquis Lucchesini went *alone* to wait on Count Esterhazy and Baron Herbert, separately, to give them notice in the most polite terms, and in a confidential manner, that unless they were authorised to recede from the new pretensions set up in the minute of the treaty, he should find himself under the disagreeable necessity of *opposing their admission,* by executing the express order of his sovereign, and making a formal declaration in Congress (to the effect mentioned in my last letter of 30th May) that his Majesty, relying implicitly on the Emperor's formal engagement, and recent promise to restore *all* his conquests at the peace, without *any exception whatever,* did now expect and require that everything should be concluded in exact conformity with the *status quo ante bellum.*

The Austrian ministers, each in his way (Count Esterhazy as a frank and liberal gentleman, Monsieur Herbert as an old practitioner in litigious politics) expressed their sense of the attention paid to them by the Prussian minister, in giving them in so obliging a manner, this previous information of a resolution on the part of his sovereign which could not fail to give them great concern. Each of these ministers concluded by assuring Marquis Lucchesini that they acted under peremptory orders, and could not recede an inch from the demands of their Court.

This important step being taken by the Prussian minister, we had reason to expect that the conference on Thursday would prove exceedingly interesting.

[*By Prussian Courier.*]

June 7th, 1791.

My Lord,

The vexatious incidents in our negotiation here have been so rapid and unexpected, within these three days, that the short interval between the conferences does not at present admit of my entering into minute details of those proceedings. I shall send your lordship in a few days the complete protocols. In the meantime, I can only express my sincere concern for the unfortunate turn which those affairs have suddenly taken, and beg your indulgence for restricting myself to the succinct Journal of the Congress.

In the night of Sunday a Tartar courier, from Constantinople to the Reis Effendi, brought me a letter from Sir Robert Ainslie, which I transmit in its original for your lordship's information. Letters of the same import were sent to my Prussian colleague.*

* In explanation of this, and the preceding letter, it may be mentioned, that the ministers of Great Britain and Prussia at *Sistovo* were at this time *jointly* and actively employed in accelerating *at the Porte*, the peace between Turkey and *Russia*.

We spoke before the opening of the Congress to Prince Morusi, chief dragoman of the Porte, who assured us that the orders brought to the Turkish plenipotentiaries were as peremptory *as possible*. We begged of him to prepare the Ottomans to listen to the request of the mediators, that they would consent to a short prolongation of the armistice, as a mark of consideration which the allied Courts had a right to expect from the Porte. This he promised to do, but without foretelling the least probability of success.

When all parties were met in Congress, the Turks began by repeating their hopes that the Austrians would, at length, give way to the incontrovertible arguments they, the Turks, had alleged.

Baron Herbert (who, for the last ten days, has assumed a high and dictatorial tone) replied by a haughty negative. This was followed by an acrimonious litigation (too long to be repeated), in which the Turks had the *better* in every argument.

Baron Herbert was once more asked by the adverse party, why, if the Emperor had any remaining rights (beyond the renewal of all treaties, &c.), he had not reserved them in the original convention, or, at least, brought them frankly forward at the commencement of the negotiation?

The Baron (ever fond of immortalising *his* State papers) produced another writing, of which I send an exact copy (marked A.)

In the course of a few minutes each of the contending parties reached the utmost limits of their instructions; the Austrians declaring that they would not recede an inch from their demands, and the Ottomans rejecting with determined resolution, all these new pretensions. At this stage of the business, and when the Turks had already made a motion to put an end to the conference, Monsieur Lucchesini found himself under the necessity

of delivering, and entering in the Protocol the declaration, in his sovereign's name, which he had so frequently announced (B.) In concluding this ministerial office, the Prussian Envoy addressed himself to Baron Haeften, and to me; claiming our concurrence, in virtue of the guarantee of the *status quo*.

I professed, in a few conciliatory phrases, my most earnest desire to fulfil with unabated zeal every duty of a mediator, and my unalterable reliance on the just and liberal principles of *all the Princes* who had a share in these engagements, or in our negotiation for the restoration of a peace so important to both empires, and which had been brought so nigh to a conclusion. I then read and delivered to the Secretary of the Congress the short declaration here inclosed (marked C.)

Baron Haeften added (by word of mouth) two or three sentences, which I have extracted from the Journal and enclosed (marked D.)

The Austrian ministers then proposed to retire to their chamber and prepare an answer in writing, which they did; and I join that reply to the enclosure (marked E.)

After this the same strong (and even hard) negatives were repeated by each of the principal parties. When I saw that all hope of accommodation by our amicable intervention in *public conference* was at an end, I claimed the right of the mediation to hold immediate and separate meetings with the ministers of each empire. This was agreed to—the parties separated, and we went first to the Austrians. I made known to them the deep concern with which we saw the hope of peace vanishing, in an unaccountable manner, by a total change of language on the part of their Court. We found the Imperialists from the first moment, *utterly averse* to the extension of the armistice, and notwithstanding all that Monsieur Lucchesini and Baron Haeften could allege in support

of my arguments, both Baron Herbert and Count Esterhazy repeated, and gave in writing, that unless the Turks would formally accept the first *seven* articles of the proposed treaty (containing all the cessions in favour of Austria) they had no authority whatever to agree to any prolongation of the armistice.

I then laid aside the tone of ministerial conference, and the use of a secretary (for all the above long convention was committed to writing), and addressed myself as an individual to the Imperialists to press the matter home to them, as men employed in the salutary work of peace. They then owned to us in *confidence* (and in their private capacity only), that they had authentic information of positive orders having been given to the Austrian generals in Wallachia, and on all the Turkish frontiers, to remain *entirely on the defensive, even after the expiration of the armistice.*

I asked them if they would authorise me to make a declaration of *this,* as from them, and with a view to engage the Turks to give similar and strict orders throughout their whole army (as at Passarowitz, when the whole peace had been negotiated without any formal suspension of arms.)

The Imperialists declared that they would have *no such proposition* carried in *their name* to the Turks. Yet they did justice to our motives, and said that such an intervention would well become our public and private characters.

With this feeble (but last) expedient we went to the Ottomans, and used all our eloquence to bring them to be the proposers of the prolongation of armistice, thinking that in this form the proposition might be accepted by the others.

But this the Turks resolutely refused; affirming that their orders were positive to listen to no proposal of that nature—that their right was clear, the duplicity of their

adversary undeniable; that the Porte would be no longer the dupe of Austrian tergiversation; that they, according to the spirit of these instructions, and nature of their Government, must obey implicitly, and possessed no right of mitigating the purport of express commands.

In the last extremity, we told the Turks that we, the mediators, would apply directly to the Grand Vizier through Colonel Goetze, to obtain an effectual, though not formal suspension of hostilities for a short time. They agreed to send a Tartar with our letter, but would not take upon them to prognosticate a favourable reply!

We appointed another general conference for to-day, and put an end to the laborious work of *seven hours* of ineffectual efforts to fulfil the orders of our sovereign, and serve the cause of humanity.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

[*No.* 62.—*By Prussian Messenger.*]

Sistovo, June 7th.

My Lord,

My preceding No. was written with the intention of forwarding it by this day's post, but the violent proceedings of the Austrian ministers in the meeting of this morning having made it absolutely necessary for the Prussian minister to dispatch a messenger to Berlin, I shall send by him these two letters, to be forwarded to Whitehall should any *safe opportunity* occur, if not, to be taken up by the messenger Shaw, whom I shall send off to England on Thursday night, with the result of the last conference (at least for a time) of this Congress.

The conference of this morning was opened by a few words I made use of to express my ardent wish that in a chamber dedicated to pacification, the work of this

day might forward the attainment of that most desirable object. The Ottomans offered to sign the peace instantly, conformably to the *status quo*, and appealed to the justice of the Supreme Being for the truth of their uniform adherence to *one principle;* calling, at the same time, for the wrath of Heaven to punish those who had swerved from that straight line of conduct.

Similar reproaches were bandied back and forward several times, when Baron Herbert produced from his inexhaustible pocket a paper, a copy of which I inclose. I have only to remark, that the words in it, "*Sans rompre le Congrès,*" were added to the original on my representation. We told them we would consider its purport a few minutes, and the Imperialists left us.

We sent for the dragoman of the Porte, Prince Morusi, to give him notice of the resolution taken by the Austrian ministers to return to Bucharest on Thursday; and we desired him to inquire and to inform us what answer the Ottomans would give to such a declaration, which (though highly disagreeable at the present moment) was conformable to precedents established by European Powers at various Congresses.

He brought us back more than one Oriental idea, conceived by the Turkish ministers; the last and most feasible of which was, that they would repair to the Congress chamber every day of the remaining *four*, till the expiration of the armistice. That on the last of those days, if they had not the pleasure of meeting the Austrians in Congress, they would deposit in the hands of the mediators their final declaration, and appeal to *all Europe*. The Turks being exceedingly *tenacious* of this idea, we acquiesced in it.

Being again assembled in Congress, M. Herbert read his farewell paper, and M. Lucchesini the above mentioned note. At the conclusion of the latter, I spoke these words, "Comme ministre médiateur, je ne puis

qu'exprimer et nourrir les mêmes espérances." Baron Haeften expressed the same hopes. Thus ended the business of the day, leaving us little hope of a favourable issue. Happy shall I be to announce a better understanding between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, till when our present labours must remain suspended.

I beg leave to add one remark, which I am confident is well founded. The Congress of Sistovo has for the last two months and more, been turned to various purposes by the secret ascendancy of the higher powers, and their negotiators have been mere *puppets*. I am persuaded your lordship has already turned an eye to Petersburgh for all the springs which gave rise to so many desultory directions, and have now put a stop to our motions.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, June 9th, 1791.

My Lord,

At the same time that I cannot help deploring the prospect now before us, of an unhappy termination of our negotiation, owing to the unjustifiable conduct of the cabinet of Vienna—the respect I owe to the character and dignity of their sovereign must restrain my pen from going too deep in my conjectures respecting the motives which engaged that monarch to permit his prime minister to *deviate so widely* as he has done from the stipulations of Reichenbach, in the unwise management of the negotiation.

Your lordship sees from high and advantageous ground, every source of the Austrian tergiversations. *I* severely feel their baneful effects here, and can only fulfil my duty by describing them *faithfully*, and making

a report of all the ineffectual measures which I myself have employed (in conjunction with my colleagues in the mediation) to prevent, or at least retard, those effects.

The expectations which were naturally formed, in consequence of the high compliment which our royal master paid to the Emperor, by the mission of Lord Elgin to Florence, received additional strength from the tenor of that letter from his lordship, a copy of which his Prussian Majesty sent to his minister here. But, in as far as I can judge, by what has passed at Sistovo, the part which the Emperor chose to embrace, after giving audience to Lord Elgin, was to order his supposed claims on the Porte to be *carried through* with the *highest hand,* and to break up the Congress, by a flat refusal of all prolongation of armistice, if the Turks remained *firm* in claiming the strict *status quo.*

Your lordship is best judge whether or not this determination, and its *headlong execution,* be of a piece with the language which his Imperial Majesty was pleased to hold to Lord Elgin, either during the period of his mission at Vienna, or during the first days of his lordship's late visit to Florence.

Certain it is, and all my colleagues can vouch for it, that from the moment Prince Kaunitz could form a tolerable guess respecting the objects of Lord Elgin's last journey—he redoubled the haughtiness and inflexibility of his instructions to Baron Herbert; and not even the terms of diplomatic decency were any longer observed in the style dictated (or at least suggested) to this minister in his language and correspondence, whenever they were addressed to the ministers of Prussia.

As an unquestionable proof that Prince Kaunitz adopted this plan at the *time* I have mentioned, I beg your lordship to remark, that, on the *second* of May, Lord Elgin set out from Vienna, and on the *seventh*

Prince Kaunitz delivered to Baron Jacobi the *note verbale*, in which the boundless extent of a *status quo*, "tel qu'il était, ou DEVAIT ÊTRE," is expressed and adopted by the Austrian ministry, and has since been the ground-work of all their reasonings at Sistova. All this might have passed for the effects of old age and passion. But we have it now, in a *note* presented by Baron Herbert in Congress, that every step of his proceedings, and all the peremptory demands he has brought forward, have been *approved and confirmed from Florence*. After this, my lord, it becomes an humble individual like me to leave to his superiors to make such observations, and draw such inferences as the facts point out.

The Turks are not to be *forced* into concession, and all regard for the Reichenbach engagements is laid aside. The confidential intercourse between Baron Herbert and the Russian commanders in Moldavia is to be more closely pursued; and perhaps the cause of Russia is to be served more and more effectually at the expense of Austrian *neutrality*, in virtue of the very convenient phrase "*ou doit être!*"

On the other hand, my lord, it cannot be doubted that besides all the ministerial offices which passed between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, a more *direct* and private explanation took place between the two monarchs themselves; which satisfied the mind of his Prussian Majesty that all must end well and *loyalement* at Sistovo.* I have myself *seen* more than one dispatch signed by the King of Prussia in *April* and *May*, in which he makes light of every suspicion hinted by his minister at this Congress, and assures him that he (the King) has *particular* reasons for placing entire confidence in the good faith and candour of his Imperial

* His own expressions (in a letter from Mr. Ewart to Sir R. Keith), were "*Ma parole est sacrée.*"

Majesty. Lord Elgin's letter from Florence found his Prussian Majesty still adhering to this persuasion and confidence. His orders to Monsieur Lucchesini express the full expectation that all difficulties must have been removed by orders *from Florence*. How the King of Prussia will feel when he learns the transactions of the last six days here, I cannot pretend to foretel.

The conference of this morning having lasted much longer than was expected, my earnest desire to send off the messenger, Shaw, this evening to London, obliges me to comprise in a narrow space the account of what passed at that meeting, and the rather, as all the principal points were treated in writing, and that the copies of all these ministerial notes inclosed, will give your lordship all the necessary information.

Previous to the opening of the Congress, the Ottoman ministers begged of the mediators to join them in their chamber. There they read to us the declaration they were to make; protesting to us once more, that their orders were *absolute* to hold such language and *no other*. Some of the phrases, which appeared to us too harsh, were softened, at the request of the mediators; but without impairing in any degree (a point on which the Turks were extremely tenacious) the *force and precision* of their *entire rejection* of all the Austrian demands, beyond the strict *status quo*.

When the Congress was assembled, Monsieur Lucchesini thought it incumbent on him to deliver in writing his remarks (inclosed No. 1) on the present situation of the negotiation. To this note Baron Herbert replied by the inclosure (No. 2). The dragoman of the Porte then read the declaration of the Ottoman ministers (inclosed No. 3). I studied the looks of the Imperial ministers (particularly Baron Herbert) during the public reading of it, and I thought I could perceive in the countenance of the latter,

much surprise and not a little *uneasiness*, at finding the Turks *coolly determined* to run all hazards rather than cede any part of what Austria had demanded.

Baron Herbert and his colleague retired to prepare an answer, and the Baron's pen (on other occasions so prolific) brought forth with long labour the counter-declaration (No. 4). When he had read and delivered it in Turkish, the conference drew to an end.

I therefore seized the opportunity of saying, in the name of all the mediators, that we felt with real affliction, the actual situation of our affairs. But, exhorting all parties to redouble their endeavours to recover the road of pacification, I expressed our sanguine hope of seeing the negotiation again resumed, and speedily, in the same chamber, and with the most desirable success in restoring tranquillity to both empires. These wishes were echoed from all quarters; and there the conference ended.

Ten minutes of total silence ensued, during which time the Secretary of the Congress copied Baron Herbert's note, and when that was done, the Imperial ministers got up to retire, making a civil compliment to the Ottomans, and manifesting their wishes to return soon to this place.

The Turks remained on their *sofas without moving;* and their dragoman said in their name, that they would continue in the place of Congress, in hopes of a more happy moment. The Austrians desired a short conference with the mediators, in which (after many personal compliments to us) they charged us to assure the Ottoman ministers of their perfect esteem and sincere gratitude for all the attentions they have met with here. The Austrians then set out on their journey, and are to sleep this night at Simnitza, a Wallachian village on the other side the Danube; they will proceed to Bucharest to-morrow.

We then returned to the Congress chamber, where the Turkish plenipotentiaries remained *immoveably* seated, as a proof that *they* had no hand in interrupting the business of the Congress.

I will not take up your lordship's time with rash surmises on what may be foreseen from these hours of *crisis*. That the Austrians were greatly *disappointed* by the conduct of the Porte, was *evident* beyond a doubt.

May the cabinet of Vienna learn from hence that justice and wisdom are almost synonymous terms, and square their future conduct accordingly!

The position of the mediating ministers here will become exceedingly difficult, and even precarious, after the departure of the Imperialists, unless their speedy return be *more* than probable. But I beg your lordship to remain assured, that my sole object (all personal comforts or conveniences being wholly out of the question) shall be to pursue the pacific negotiation with assiduity and perseverance, as long as the last shred of it remains within my sight. I shall continue here (at all events) till I see whether your lordship has any fresh order for me respecting the peace between the Porte and Russia.

Should unfortunately (and I still say very improbably) the sword be again drawn between the Austrians and Turks, I shall be forced to retire to Hermanstadt, in Transylvania, being the nearest Imperial town out of the immediate theatre of hostility. But in every other case I shall certainly not quit Sistovo till the Prussian minister has orders to do so, in consequence of the entire dissolution of the Congress.

Your lordship will easily conceive with what impatience a man, in my present situation, must look for the return of your commands by a messenger, who will learn from Mr. Stratton, at Vienna, where I am to be found. I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 9th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I yesterday received and forwarded your very interesting dispatches of the 18th and 20th May.

Without a chart to explain the 6th Article of Baron Herbert's project, and without more knowledge of the topography of the Turkish frontiers than I possess, I cannot frame any idea of the intrinsic value of this new demand. I am content, therefore, to admire in silence "*la distinction si belle et si neuve d'un* status quo *strict de droit et de fait, qui se modifie l'un par l'autre !*" You will do me the justice to recollect, that I foretold to you, so long ago as last December, that you must expect "*quelque tour d'escamotage de cette espèce.*" And I did not believe it the less, because Prince Kaunitz was at the time assuring us that such a proposition would never be brought forward as a pretension, but would only be suggested, subject to one previous occurrence, and *au bon gré des Turcs.* I equally admire the timing of this demand so critically at the close of the armistice. As to the point itself, unless the districts demanded are of essential and solid importance to the Porte, I heartily hope that they may be ceded with the best grace possible. It is worth some sacrifice in this business, as it has been in some others, to unmask the characters and principles of those with whom we have to do in this world. There is a moral justice in politics which, sooner or later, brings a day of retribution. I sincerely wish, therefore, that the Turks may have accepted the project with such modifications or corrections as they can obtain. If, in return, they require that all the new works constructed in their fortified places to be restored by the Austrians be left untouched, it would be reasonable

and would, I think, be granted. I wish to God you were clear of Sistovo, and once more at the fountain-head of all these little manœuvres! You must be sick to death of your Turkish village!

Monsieur Lucchesini had written to Monsieur Henfner at this place, on the subject of his strange pretension about signature;* I imagine that Henfner's answer will quiet him. A circumstance somewhat of a similar nature happened at Madrid under the late and present Kings of Spain. The ambassadresses go at the same time to Court, and to Court ceremonies; but they are received separately and singly. It was necessary, therefore, to decide between the English and the Sardinian, and the decision was given in favour of the former, and strictly maintained; the latter being a crowned head only of the present century.

Adieu, my dear Sir Robert. I expect in five or six days the first messages from Petersburgh. I trust that that after *competent* delays, we shall end in a general pacification *somehow*. I recommend this to Mr. Stratton, who discharges your functions ably and satisfactorily.

Yours most sincerely,

AUCKLAND.

MR. TREVOR† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Turin, June 7th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I have already desired Lord Elgin to say everything kind to you from me, and I cannot let my old, and your present *confrère*, Marquis Gallo, return to Vienna without renewing the same assurances. I flatter myself that from all I hear, you will soon be released

* The claim resisted by Sir R. Murray Keith, for precedence, or even exact equality on the part of the King of Prussia and his own Sovereign.

† Son to Lord Hampden, British Minister at Turin, and a friend of Sir R. M. Keith. This letter is full of curious prognostics.

from your honourable prison, your piastres, and pillaw. I hope that the late separation of ministers was only that of *persons;* and that the principles of the negotiation remain entire and compact; *et qu'on n'a reculé que pour mieux sauter,* quand *Sémiramis** sera prête à sauter aussi. There is, however, a strange report at present in the mouth of ministers, which I mention without believing; it is that French money has found its way into the Divan, and that its sinister effects are visible in the present conduct of the Turks. But what would the Allies say if they perceive this manœuvre? and what would become of the Porte if the Allies were to abandon her? That France—*i.e.,* the National Assembly, should attempt this, I think very likely. Their present anarchical system can only subsist by the folly or misfortune of others; not that in any case, so baseless and visionary a fabric can long exist, and doubtless the term of its duration is already assigned.

As to a plan of confederacy against the revolution, among the different powers of Europe (which the Artois party so fondly persuade themselves of,) your able judgment will know much better than I do, how difficult, if not impracticable, that would be. Not but there are several whose interests and wishes, some from hope, and some from fear, would induce them to be of this *pique nique.* Spain and this country,† I take to be of that number; but alas, we are here far from being in a situation to attack others. This country will have enough to do to prevent the flames catching its own roofs, and could ill afford to send its pumps and firemen to the assistance of its neighbours; who, by the by, desire no such assistance, and

Invitum qui servant idem facit occidenti.

You know best whether your wise and cautious

* The Empress of Russia. † Sardinia.

sovereign* is disposed to lead down this dance. *Ces diables de Jacobins nous donneront tous du fil à tordre;* and I fear all Europe sooner or later, will feel the effects of this moral and political earthquake. Great Britain I look upon as honoured with their peculiar hatred, because it is the wisest and happiest government in the world; and I have heard some instances of their mischievous and impertinent intrigues in England, that, though I have too good an opinion of the wisdom and firmness of government, and of the good sense of the people in general, to be alarmed, I should not be surprised if, before you received this, some violent tumults and disturbances should have been at least attempted.

The modern madness is said to have gained several thousand heads in London, who were disposed to celebrate the commemoration of the 14th July with national *cockades, flags,* &c., and what say you to a ship loaded with those articles having actually been discovered *en contrebande,* and *coulé à fond* at sea? In short, my dear Sir Robert, these are much more eventful and historic times than I should have wished to live in; and one need have all your philosophy and good humour to bear them patiently.

But, enough; the pleasure I have in chatting with you makes me forget how unmercifully I abuse your patience. So, with all good wishes for your health and happiness, and with entreaties to let me hear from you,

I remain your faithful and affectionate,

J. T.

P. S.—You will have heard, I hope, the important event of the French King's flight and recapture, without passing through all the stages of false hopes and fears, to which we here have been exposed by the *mauvaises*

* The Emperor Leopold—so called on account of Sir R. M. K.'s residence at his Court.

têtes, and fond and sanguine wishes of counter-revolutionists; and which we have innocently spread all over Europe. The Emperor himself was not undeceived with respect to the history of Monsieur Bouillé's rescue, till the 5th or 6th of this month. In short, never was delusion more complete. I shall be anxious to know how far the Emperor was *privy* to this measure. I have many reasons for thinking he must have been so; but I have too high an opinion of his wisdom and prudence to believe that he *approved*.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistovo, June 9th, 1791.

All my laughing humour has left me, for this last month, my dear Anne, though I never was better in point of health, in my whole life. I have deferred writing to you in hopes of a more propitious turn in our affairs. It has not taken place; but I cannot relinquish all hope of it. I told you in my last, that we had got our political bark once more afloat, and were sailing with a fair wind for our destined harbour.

Yes, my dear friend; but the Austrian Cabinet thought proper, on a sudden, to bore two or three holes in her bottom, (for which, Lord forgive them!) and with all our pumps at work, we can hardly keep her from sinking. We have no less than six feet water in the hold at this moment; yet I (who am a pretty hardy sailor,) will strain every nerve to bring her safe into port.

Metaphor apart. The Austrians peremptorily demand what the Turks as peremptorily refuse. The latter have solemn treaties, and indisputable right on their side, and besides, are desirous to keep their own heads on their shoulders.

The Austrians are haughty, seem inflexible, and endeavour to intimidate the Ottomans. With that

view, they declared to us on Tuesday, that they should set out from hence on Thursday, to make a *tour* to Bucharest; but without *dissolving* the Congress, and ready to return hither, at our first invitation.

The Turks promised to give an answer in *writing* to the Austrians in the Congress this morning, (Thursday) and to that meeting I am now going. At my return I shall add a few lines to this hasty letter, and in a few hours after I shall dispatch a messenger to England. Adieu, my dear sisters. I have had a *hard time of it* for these last seven months—and all for *this!* But I have done what mortal man *can* do (and all parties acknowledge it) to keep matters right; and if the Empress of Russia had not maintained a dangerous ascendancy at Vienna, which thwarted all our best purposes—we must infallibly have succeeded. God bless you.

June 9th. Afternoon.

The conference of this forenoon was peremptory on all sides, but not boisterous. The Austrians passed the Danube an hour ago, after taking a very polite (but not a formal leave) and promising to return. All this is black, very black! but I think my *pumps* begin to work a little more freely than they did, and there is half an inch less water in the hold. We mediators, and the Mussulmen (*men* they have shown themselves by their behaviour of this day) remain steady at Sistovo. Remember, my dear Anne, never to breed your sons *Plenipos!*

MR. EWART* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Berlin, June 18th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received yours of the 4th current last night, and the inclosed copy of a dispatch to Lord Grenville

* His Majesty's Minister at Berlin; an acute and able diplomatist.

which I have just written, will make you acquainted with the result of what has passed here, in consequence of the reception of the papers from Sistovo. You will be more fully informed of the particulars, by Monsieur Lucchesini, who is *expressly directed* to show you *everything*, with the most unbounded confidence, in return for your cordial co-operation, of which this Court is so highly sensible.

You will admit that there is no apology for the Emperor's conduct, the total change in which I know to be occasioned by his belief that England is rendered incapable of taking any active part in foreign affairs; that England will thereby be laid under an effectual restraint; and that he will be able to deceive his Prussian Majesty, and Colonel Bischoffswerder. You will see, however, by the instructions sent to the latter, that his Imperial Majesty deceives himself in regard to the last mentioned points; and, embarrassing as the situation of the ministry actually is in England, I trust the spirit of the nation would be roused to support its honour.

What a dreadful change has taken place! Our influence was all-powerful, so long as it was maintained with the necessary vigour; and the moment we flinched, all the Powers, as if by common consent, turned the tables upon us; and from having had the certainty of restoring peace in our power, there seems now to be the greatest wish of a general confusion. I have unfortunately proved too true a prophet, for I have assured our principals, for this twelvemonth, that this was the only alternative. I hope I shall have occasion to acquaint you fully, one day or other, of what passed when I was in England; and you will agree that it is impossible to suffer greater mortification than I do at this moment. I am, therefore, more disgusted with the profession than you can conceive. My only comfort

is, that the resources of England and Prussia, being actually in a much better state than those of other powers, and the wretched state of Austria and Russia being well known—there is nothing to be feared should things come to extremities. As the idea of affecting a counter-revolution in France appears to be the great object the Emperor has in view at present, it is conceived here that however inconsistent this may be with his pretensions at Sistovo, yet should he be seriously inclined to embark in that business, it will not be in his power to insist on his unjust claims against the Porte.

The Empress of Russia and Potemkin are striving who can throw most ridicule on England, and our ministers, at Petersburgh. Their evident intention is to gain time, and to push their operations on the Black Sea. Oh! how my blood boils, my dear Sir! Jackson sends his best compliments, and I beg you will give mine to Lucchesini.

Most truly, yours,

JOSEPH EWART.

[*Most Secret.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. STRATTON.*

Sistovo, June 19th, 1791.

I WRITE you this very confidential letter, my dear Stratton, by Mr. Tarrant, brother-in-law to Marquis Lucchesini, who goes to Vienna as courier with many interesting matters of which the Marquis has under the *seal of secresy,* and for the good of the common cause, given me the most distinct details, which relate to the

* Sir R. M. K.'s Secretary of Legation, left as Chargé d' Affaires at Vienna. This *scrap* is given as a specimen of that slight and common cypher, in which numbers instead of representing *every word,* only stand for proper names.

business in which *Fuimus* * has been so long and fruitlessly engaged. 1. does not know to what degree 20 is informed, and Murrays-hall † shall always keep that to himself.

But it is necessary, and even expressly ordered by 30 ‡ that 15 should not, for the present, be let into any part of those secrets. I am therefore requested to give it to 21 upon his honour, to refrain from all participation to 15, or to any other person respecting the matters, themselves, or the mission of the bearer of this letter, who will probably, and perhaps *secretly*, join 25, § wherever he may be. Forgive me, my dear Stratton, if I wrap up all this in so much mystery (not having time for cypher); it was on this condition that the confidence to me was rendered so *complete*, and I pawned my word for your discretion. I have only one word to add, my dear friend, which is that upon my honour, I think the steps now taken by 30 towards 25 are the most proper in every respect that the actual situation of affairs could suggest.

Adieu, my trusty friend, this whole affair remains an absolute secret between you and your faithful

R. M. K.

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 28th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I write chiefly for the purpose of informing you that Shaw arrived here with your very important

* This epithet for the Earl of Elgin, is derived from his *motto*, the *royal* one of Bruce.

† Sir Robert Keith himself—so styled from his estate, according to Scottish custom.

‡ The King of Prussia. § The Emperor.

dispatches on the 24th, and was forwarded to England by the first boat that could sail. His passage will have been slow, for we have strong westerly winds.

I need not inform you that the conduct of the Imperial plenipotentiaries, which surprises many, does not surprise me. You know that I did not expect anything that could come within the rules either of good faith or of good policy. I have long considered the hand of Providence as bearing in an especial manner upon the present established governments of Europe, so as to make them operate blindly and obstinately towards their own destruction, towards the general anarchy of mankind, and a vast scene of wild calamity and carnage.

Nothing less than a special Providence, for some unknown purpose, can explain the measures of the Vienna ministry. Having persuaded themselves that the Reichenbach Convention was disgraceful to their empire (in which, by the by, I totally differ from them, for I think it a *wise* treaty, if they had honourably and cheerfully executed it), they attempt to cover the supposed disgrace by allowing Monsieur Herbert to introduce and maintain subterfuges and chicanes which would have disgraced a Jesuit in his cell. So much for the principle. Next, as to the policy. For the sake of acquiring a miserable and imperceptible addition of useless possession, they now risk the involving themselves and all Europe in the calamities and embarrassments of a general war, at a moment when it was not only important but essential for the Emperor in every political, religious, moral, fraternal, and social point of view, to have placed himself on a most friendly understanding with Prussia and the maritime powers; and to have had his hands at liberty to act, where alone it is material to him in particular, to his honour, and the happiness of mankind in general, that they should act. We have a very expressive word in our language,

"*infatuation*;" I do not recollect any synonymous word in others; but it is the only term that I can give to the conduct which I have just described. I lament it most sincerely; the effects will bear hard upon England, as well as upon other countries, but if the bitter cup is *forced* upon our lips, we must taste it.

Having spoken of the principle and policy, I must add a word as to the execution and detail. I do not mean to go through the long list of the Austrian minutes and declarations. I sincerely pity Baron Herbert, if he thought himself obliged to put his name to them, and I hope that, for his sake, they may never be published! But his last measure, of removing from the place of Congress, deserves a word of remark. If his demands had been as indisputable as they were the contrary, it did not belong to him, at least, to break up or separate the Congress which his master had demanded, and to which the mediation and guarantee of other Powers had been solemnly solicited and accepted. I will not pursue the subject farther; thank God, it does not belong to me to decide respecting it. In the meantime, my friendship for you, and my feelings as *your* countryman, have made me peruse with *pride and pleasure* the whole history of your becoming conduct in such embarrassing circumstances.

Ever, dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 1st, 1791.

MY LORD,

Two couriers and two estafettes have brought from Berlin within these eight-and-forty hours, very flattering letters to the Prussian minister here, to whose confidence (as well as to the letters with which Mr.

Ewart has favoured me) I stand indebted for the complete and satisfactory information that the firm and dignified language held by his Prussian Majesty to the Court of Vienna, will, in all probability, soon produce the happy effect of restoring activity to this Congress; and on such a basis as to promise a safe and honourable termination of our labours. I need not assure your lordship how much the three mediating ministers have it at heart to contribute to the attainment of so salutary an object, by pursuing, with an unwearied, yet temperate zeal, every proper means of conciliation.

We have good reason for believing that the Court of Vienna (having at length adopted such principles as can alone lead to pacification) will, in a very little time, send orders to the Imperial plenipotentiaries at Bucharest to return to Sistovo.

In the meantime, it may be proper to acquaint your lordship, that since the abrupt and ill-judged secession of these ministers, we have had no other intercourse with them than by receiving and delivering to the Ottoman ministers their letters dated Bucharest, 13th June, both of which have remained *unanswered*. We may now rely on the *ministerial* assurances given to Baron Jacobi at Vienna, that the Austrian troops in Wallachia have positive orders to refrain from any species of hostility against the Turks; and as we have hitherto found the Grand Vizier well disposed to regulate *his* conduct on that head in conformity to the wishes we have earnestly and repeatedly expressed, we are in the persuasion that the advices sent from hence last night to his Highness will confirm his resolution to maintain (*de facto*) the suspension of arms for that *short* period of time which is necessary to render manifest those amicable purposes which Austria once more *professes* to entertain.

We have found it a hard task, my lord, to keep matters thus in a state of tranquillity since the expiration of the armistice. But we trust that the first open and effectual step which it shall please the Court of Vienna to take to ensure the renewal of the Congress, will greatly alleviate the inquietude of that precarious situation in which we have lived for this month past.

[*Cypher.*]

Colonel Goetze* writes, that since the suspension of the Congress, suspicions, however ill-founded, of his Prussian Majesty having in a manner abandoned the Ottoman cause, have risen to such a pitch, that his own life and those of his Prussian companions have been in imminent danger. The Grand Vizier gave him notice, underhand, to withdraw for some little time from the head quarters. This he has done, and his efforts to induce the Vizier to treat with Russia, are necessarily suspended. We shall endeavour to keep the Vizier back from all enterprise against Austria till the King of Prussia shall have decided the great question; and in this *crisis* await anxiously further tidings from Vienna.

R. M. K.

[*By Lucchesini's Courier.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 6th, 1791.

My Lord,

In the painful state of inactivity and suspense in which we are held at Sistovo, and whilst the Grand Vizier adheres to the resolution of waiting the final decision of his Prussian Majesty before he undertakes

* The King of Prussia's agent at the Grand Vizier's camp.

anything hostile against the Austrians, I can only join with my colleagues here in thinking it most *extraordinary* that the repeated professions and promises made by the Emperor at Milan, to Lord Elgin and Colonel Bischoffswerder, have hitherto produced not the smallest alteration here, or communication from the Austrian plenipotentiaries at Bucharest to us.

It would seem, my lord, that Prince Kaunitz either does not obey the orders he receives from his sovereign, or prefers the gratification of his own vanity to the interests of the State, by endeavouring to capitulate with the Prussian cabinet in such a manner as to avoid (if possible) the mortification of being obliged to send back the Austrian ministers to Sistovo, to *unsay* at once all that they had so peremptorily asserted, in consequence of his imperious and capricious mandate.

I can easily conceive, my lord, that this method of proceeding, and all the procrastination which arises from it, may equally suit with the pride of Prince Kaunitz, and with the interests of Russia, which he has so much at heart. But I cannot help regretting that he is so far indulged in it by the Court of Berlin, as to afford the Grand Vizier very serious cause of complaint, that he must lose the best months of the year for action, while he remains in uncertainty whether he is to look upon Austria as a neutral power, or as an enemy.

From the several private conferences which Monsieur Lucchesini has lately held with the Ottomans, he has found them extremely well-disposed to listen to the advice of their faithful ally, the King of Prussia, whose late generous assurances have filled them with gratitude. In short, my lord, I am convinced that everything may be obtained from them which the mediation shall advise, and which the Court of Vienna can demand with the smallest shadow of reason. But I must add, that all this ought to be carried into effect with the least

delay *possible*, lest a sudden start of passion on the part of Mahmoud Pasha, whose character is violent, and his hatred to Austria *implacable*, should lead him to exert those ample powers—which have, of necessity, been intrusted to him by the Porte—of acting for *himself*, and with very little dependence on the will of the Vizier.

A small Austrian corps has been constantly posted at Califat, opposite to Widdin. This is a great *eye-sore* to Mahmoud, and the Turks here say they cannot be answerable for his not being tempted to chase the Austrians from thence, in spite of all the temperate advice conveyed to him by the Grand Vizier.

The first shot in Wallachia would (as Monsieur Spielman* has declared to Baron Jacobi) instantly *unite the Austrians and Russians*. I will not, though we have a right to suspect everything after all the double dealing we have experienced, harbour, even for a moment, the suspicion that it may be consistent with the views of Prince Kaunitz to rekindle war between the Porte and Austria, and thereby rivet the fetters which have so long bound the latter to Russia.

When (and I cannot doubt its shortly taking place) the Austrian ministers are sent back to Sistovo, our work may be finished in a few conferences. His Imperial Majesty has promised Lord Elgin to send the ratification here along with the treaty, and I trust that on this point, as on every other, the Imperial word will be held sacred.

I shall meet the Austrian plenipotentiaries with the true spirit of conciliation, and shall continue to act in the strictest concert with my Prussian colleague, whose reports to his Court of the hearty co-operation he has at all times experienced on my part, have procured me the honour of receiving, more than once, the thanks of

* One of the principal ministers of the Austrian Cabinet.

his liberal-minded sovereign. I am likewise happy to furnish Mr. Ewart (in return for the very instructive letters with which he has favoured me) the most authentic and recent information respecting the state of the Prussian affairs at Constantinople. I gave your lordship in my last the substance of Sir Robert Ainslie's letters of the 14th, sent hither by his janissary; several parts of which, being *out of cypher,* could not be trusted to the Vienna post. I now send the letters themselves, with their duplicates, to go by messenger to England, or by the Berlin post, *no part of which passes through the Austrian territory.*

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

P.S.—Since writing the above, a courier has arrived from Berlin with a copy of a most *strange* proposition (inclosed) from Prince Reuss, regarding a demand on the part of Austria, for a deposit of fortresses, &c. In my humble opinion, Prince Kaunitz could not have possibly invented a shift in the negotiation more *directly repugnant* to the interests and settled principles of the Ottoman Porte than that of the aforesaid deposit. And in answer to the firm and becoming language held by the Prussian ministry in their reply, I do not suppose it possible for the Cabinet of Vienna to make even a *plausible* rejoinder.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. EWART.*

Sistovo, July 6th, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

In return for your very interesting letters of the 18th and 19th June, I send you inclosed a whole budget of Turkish letters, and a long dispatch from myself to

* British minister at Berlin.

the office. The length of the latter, and the hurry which attends the sudden departure of this messenger, prevent my entering into any other subject with you; but you may be assured that, however strong the epithets you are inclined to bestow on Austrian duplicity, they cannot go beyond my honest indignation. You may likewise rely on my full and cordial co-operation with my Prussian colleague in every object which so closely unites the interests of our two Courts. I beg you will express to the Prussian ministers my just sense of the honour done me by the thanks of their sovereign, conveyed to England; and likewise my steady determination to show myself worthy of their esteem.

You will forward the Turkish letters and my dispatch to England as you may think proper; but I beg that in any case they may be left under flying seal, and addressed to Lord Auckland for his perusal. Adieu, my dear Sir; you easily conceive that writing and copying all with *my own pen*, I must be brief, not to retard the departure of the messenger. For God's sake, help to get me soon out of this abominable place, and with honour and satisfaction to the allied Courts.

Yours very truly,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 8th, 1791.

MY LORD,

I had the honour to acquaint your lordship in my letter of the 6th (by a Prussian courier) that in consequence of assurances given at Milan, his Prussian Majesty had adopted the belief that the Austrian ministers must have returned some time ago to this place, and that considerable progress must have been made in our pacific negotiation. A few hours after

Monsieur Lucchesini had sent back the courier with the necessary information that all remained here in *total suspense,* Monsieur Timoni, (the Austrian interpreter,) brought to the three mediating ministers assembled at my house the note *addressed to himself,* of which your lordship will find a copy inclosed.

It required no great sagacity to discover that Baron Herbert, being unwilling to descend from the very superior tone of his last letter of 18th June to the mediation, had thought proper to make an *approach* towards a renewal of correspondence by an indirect insinuation, under pretext of clearing up a trifling dispute in which a *freebooter* of Nicopolis was the principal personage.

We therefore told M. Timoni that so *weighty* a matter as the *ministerial* engagement on the part of Austria, that the armistice *de fait* should be *religiously observed,* and hope entertained by Baron Herbert "*de la prompte réprise et conclusion des affaires de la paix,*" ought not to have been signified to us under so unbecoming a form, and jumbled together with the paltry incident of a Turkish robbery!

M. Timoni, by many broken sentences, and meanings half expressed, gave us to understand that the Austrian plenipotentiaries had informed him in part of what had lately passed at Milan, and of the prospect of conciliation which had recently been opened to them. But that he believed, or supposed (for he never employed a direct affirmative) that these gentlemen were in expectation of receiving an *invitation* from the mediators to return to Sistovo.

To this I answered, by declaring, that as the Austrian ministers had, in their letter of the 13th June *to us,* expressly made it a *sine quâ non* of their return hither, that any invitation on our part should contain an acknowledgment of, and the Turkish acquiescence in, every

demand made by their Court—they must be very ignorant, indeed, of the actual state of those affairs, to live in the least expectation of receiving an invitation of that nature, either from the Porte, or the ministers of the mediating Powers. That the *orders* to the Imperial plenipotentiaries would, of course, be sent *to them* from Vienna, and that we were much surprised at their not receiving them sooner.

Here this matter ended, and I should not have troubled your lordship with the detail of it, if it did not serve to prove how tardy is every move of the Cabinet of Vienna towards conciliation, and how awkwardly Baron Herbert sets about every step which may betray a necessity of descending from the summit of dictatorial supremacy, on which he had (as he thought) so immoveably taken his stand. We hope, however, that after all these habitual *littlenesses*, Baron Herbert will, in a few days, vouchsafe to announce to us his speedy return hither, in obedience to *positive orders* from his superiors.

I have put all these dealings in the single name of Baron H., because he alone holds the diplomatic pen, and that to his "*exclusive talents*" and "*consummate experience in affairs of State*," his Court has thought proper to entrust the sole management of this *knotty* and *crooked* negotiation.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 16th, 1791.

My Lord,

What I foretold in my No. 76, respecting the acquiescence of the Turkish plenipotentiaries in the proposal of the mediators for a *short* renewal of the armistice, is completely verified, as your lordship will

see by the inclosed note from Prince Morusi (principal dragoman to the Porte), containing in his own incorrect French, the translation from the Turkish of their resolution in regard to the foundation and form of this renewal. The Turks are very desirous to limit their armistice to a *fortnight;* but if the Austrian ministers, on their return hither, should make any strong objections to the shortness of the suspension, the Turks will consent to establish it for *three weeks,* but not longer.

In the meantime, it becomes necessary to acquaint your lordship with the correspondence now carried on, by letter, between Monsieur Lucchesini, and the Austrian ministers at Bucharest, the *satisfactory* conclusion of which is hourly expected.

Availing himself on the receipt, yesterday morning, of the *note verbale* containing his Prussian Majesty's *ultimatum* of the following phrase in it, relative to the recall of the Imperialists hither—"On *espère* que les Plénipotentiaires Impériaux (dont la déclaration catégorique du 13 Juin, de ne pouvoir conclure que sur le pied de leurs *premières propositions, a semblé exclure toute négociation ultérieure,* (feront part PRÉALABLEMENT aux ministres médiateurs, du changement survenu dans leurs ordres, et de leur disposition à reprendre les conférences"—my Prussian colleague determined to fulfil his master's instructions, by dispatching (in his own single name) the letter inclosed (No. 8) to the Austrian ministers, to obtain from them that *previous intimation* to the *three* mediators which his Court requires. I trust, my lord, that the Imperialists will comply with this necessary requisition, and that their answer (which I had hoped to join to this) will announce their return to Sistovo to-morrow, or next day.

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, July 9th, 1791, A.M.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot make so much use of this occasion as I could have wished. The messenger arrived late last night, and another messenger with him, who is also charged with voluminous dispatches for Berlin, and inclosures for Petersburgh; and I am charged to make, and retain copies of the whole. In short, I, and the gentlemen of my bureau, have been kept up almost all night; and I have given my promise to the messengers that they shall quit my door before the clock strikes nine this morning.

I trust and hope that much of what is going now to you will be rendered useless by the rapid course of these eventful times, long before it arrives. The Emperor and Prince Kaunitz have at last arrived at the happy circumstance of talking both the same language. I infer from it that his Majesty's *loyauté* will at last take place of his minister's impracticability and chicane; that peace will take place at Sistovo; and also that the negotiation will end happily at Petersburgh. In short we are getting, not uncreditably, out of the scrape into which we had entangled ourselves, for the benefit of others. But all this is all old history! There is one good purpose in this messenger's dispatches. He carries you leave to return to your post at Vienna! I have long and ardently wished, and have repeatedly written so to Lord Grenville, to have you released out of that dark, and helpless, and barbarous *séjour* of Sistovo. I hope that you are very *highly paid* for being there; it merits at least that consolation! I shall soon expect to hear that Baron Herbert has stepped off his stilts into the puddle of diplomatic dirt which he has prepared for himself.

As to the Emperor's future system and conduct, you will be best able to judge, and decide on your return to Vienna. If he sees his interest, I think he will follow it; but his views have hitherto been distracted amidst the unsettled multiplicity of objects and pursuits. It certainly is his first interest, as it is the interest of all of us, to have peace at any rate; and to keep his dominions from catching the pestiferous disease of French innovations. If this can be done for a short period, there will be no further danger; for France is running rapidly to a farther crisis of anarchy and of extreme calamity: and will soon cease to be an object of imitation to the zealots of any nation. She will also soon present some curious questions for the friendly concert of the sovereigns of other kingdoms. In short, it is clearly the Emperor's interest to be cordially well with us; and I hope and trust that he will feel, and see it to be so. Can you decypher this scrawl? I am ashamed to send it in such a shape.

Ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

P.S.—It will be a satisfaction to you to see that our new principal* is cordially and fully sensible of the merits and importance of your conduct in all the trying business of your negotiation.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 19th, 1791.

IT is with infinite pleasure, my lord, that I now see the pacific negotiation in which I have the honour to bear a part, in so fair a way of being brought, without further delay, to that happy issue which is so conformable to the wishes of our benevolent sovereign.

It is matter of great satisfaction to me to have it in

* Lord Grenville.

my power to say, that the Austrian ministers returned here from Bucharest last night. They paid a visit this morning to each of the mediating ministers, and the declaration they made to me, singly, respecting the spirit of the instructions which occasioned their return hither, was to the following effect:—

That they are ready to sign a convention for the renewal of the armistice, for a short space of time.

That they are authorised to proceed to the signature of the definitive treaty of peace, on the sole basis of the *status quo de fait*, et NON PAS DE DROIT.

That such points as cannot be settled between Austria and the Porte by immediate negotiation, shall be hereafter regulated by a separate convention.

That they have orders to show to the mediating ministers in general, a just and well merited confidence; but that they are particularly enjoined to testify to the Prussian minister, the firm reliance which the Emperor places in the friendship of the King of Prussia, with whom his political connection becomes every day more and more intimate.

Such, my lord, is the fair prospect now before us. The sudden departure of the Prussian messenger obliges me to confine myself to this brief statement of facts.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 22nd, 1791.

My Lord,

I mentioned to your lordship in my preceding letter, the visit paid to me by the Austrian ministers on the morning after their return from Bucharest, and the declaration they then made to me.

I was soon after acquainted by Monsieur Lucchesini, that in a previous and long visit, these ministers had

informed him that their Court, at the same time that they wished to bring the definitive treaty to a speedy conclusion, under the mediation of the three allied powers, and on the single principle of the strict *status quo*, had particularly charged them to address themselves to *him*, (the Prussian minister) singly; in order to effectuate through the singular weight which, as the minister of an ally, he had acquired with the Turks, an amicable agreement on all the points in contestation, which were hereafter to be regulated by a *separate convention* between the two contracting parties. They gave him also to understand that though the Emperor did not mean to *confound* in any shape, the treaty of peace, and the aforesaid convention, yet he had it much at heart to make them *simultaneous* acts.

Monsieur Lucchesini (after explaining that an apparently wilful, and obstinately persevered in misapprehension of the Austrian ministers, as to the delay which might arise from reference to the three mediating powers, had the King of Prussia's other suggestion of *arbitration* by them been adhered to, had given rise to the present substitution,) ended by saying that he had therefore agreed to employ his single good offices for the arrangement of the separate convention; but with the entire knowledge of his colleagues in the mission.

I told the Prussian minister that the object of my mission there being the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace on the sole principle of the *status quo ante bellum*, that great point being secured, and put in the way of a speedy and *certain* termination, I should be little in pain through what channel a *separate* and *subsequent* convention, in which the mediation was to take no share, could be brought to bear: that the only *proviso* on which I must insist was, that no article in it should be in the smallest degree repugnant to the instructions which Baron de Haeften and myself had received from

our Courts relative to such *immaterial* concessions as the Porte should, not only *willingly*, but even without a *shadow* of menace or constraint, judge proper to grant to Austria, to prevent the delays which might result from any other mode of proceeding, and in order to consolidate the peace, by rooting out all seeds of dissension, for the time coming: that I expected, and required an immediate communication of every proposal made by Austria, and of every Turkish answer; that I might have it in my power to oppose (if necessary) whatever clause might appear to me to be in any degree inconsistent with my instructions. To this Marquis Lucchesini readily consented, and your lordship will see, in the inclosed papers, that he has acted up to that agreement.

On the evening of Tuesday the three mediators went together to Count Esterhazy's house, where we met Baron Herbert by appointment. I then made a proposal in form to those ministers, and in the most pressing terms, to proceed without a *moment's* delay, to the renewal of the convention of armistice for the term of *three weeks*. The Austrians insisted long for a prolongation of a *month;* they, however, at length consented to the shortest of these terms. But, my lord, to our great surprise they declared, and remained inflexible in maintaining, that they had no authority to bind their Court to terminate the negotiation in the space of three weeks. After two hours of fruitless debate, we were forced to leave them, without having carried that point which his Prussian Majesty looks upon as *indispensable*. The next morning they waited on the Prussian minister, and seemed little disposed to give us satisfaction on any of the points under immediate discussion.

I proposed to my colleagues in the mediation, that we should jointly deliver on the succeeding day a very

pressing invitation *in writing*, to resume without the smallest delay the work of pacification, and to carry it *immediately* to that happy conclusion which was evidently within our reach, by the declared concurrence of all parties, in *one and the same principle*. My colleagues joined with me in thinking this a *duty incumbent* on us, and they desired me to draw up such an invitation in the most urgent terms. I accordingly committed to paper what your lordship will find inclosed (marked B), which was approved of and delivered accordingly.

On the morning of Thursday, Monsieur Lucchesini found the Austrian ministers rather more tractable than heretofore. They put into his hands, and begged of him to present to the three mediators, the minutes of the definitive treaty (such as Prince Kaunitz had *now* sent it to them), and which they hoped would be liable to no objection, as the 4th, 5th, and 6th Articles (containing all the Austrian claims and demands) are *entirely omitted*. I do not trouble your lordship with a new copy, as with this *subtraction* it is *verbatim* the same with that discussed in Congress in the middle of May!

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 27th, 1791.

My Lord,

In the afternoon of the 25th instant the messenger Wiffin delivered to me your lordship's dispatches Nos. 5 and 6.

The very gracious manner in which his Majesty has been pleased to signify his approbation of my zealous services, is to me the best of all rewards; and would

prove the most powerful of all incentives to redouble those efforts, if one grain of additional energy or efficacy could be found within the reach of my poor abilities, beyond what I have constantly exerted. I am thoroughly sensible of, and grateful for, that goodness which dictated to your lordship the flattering expressions of esteem and confidence which accompany the notification of the new commission which his Majesty intends to put into my hands as soon as the affairs of this Congress shall be terminated.

The instructions your lordship has sent me with regard to *both* are clear and satisfactory in the highest degree, and they shall be fulfilled with prudential caution, and undeviating punctuality.

But happily for the King's beneficent views, and for your lordship's patriotic wishes, a great part of the instructions contained in No. 5, is now inapplicable to the state of affairs at Sistovo, since the fortunate turn they have taken, in consequence of the spirited language held by the Allied Powers, at London, Berlin, Vienna, and Milan. We have now, my lord, the best grounds to believe that in the course of eight or ten days, the definitive treaty of peace will be signed here on the original principle of the *status quo ante bellum*, and there is every reason to hope that the repeated explanations which have taken place between the sovereigns of Austria, England, and Prussia, will not only have served to consummate that work, and all its *appendages*, but to establish a real and solid foundation of reciprocal esteem and confidence between those three great monarchs, whose intimate connection will become the best security of the future tranquillity of Europe.

I am glad to repeat it, my lord, that there is no cause to apprehend that affairs here should fall once more into that perplexity and danger which would call upon me to fulfil your lordship's eventual instructions, with that

force which they ought to carry along with them. But if (contrary to all appearances) such a risk of disunion should again be brought into view, your lordship's directions for my guidance are *explicit*, and shall, in such case, be zealously executed.

There is but one point of the King's commands, that of my speedy return to Vienna, which it does not depend on me to follow out with that expedition which corresponds with my own hearty wishes. It appears to me, my lord, that indispensable duty ties me down to this spot, till it shall be determined whether or not the exigence of affairs requires any arbitration on the part of the mediating ministers, in order to put the finishing hand likewise to the separate convention.

Your lordship may be assured that whenever I can safely say to my superiors, and in my own conscience, that my commission here has acquired that full completion which his Majesty has a right to expect from a faithful servant, I shall hasten to get out of this miserable Bulgarian cage, and return to Vienna with as much expedition as desolated countries, burning huts, and the obstacles created by armies *in march*, will permit. To be the bearer of the *olive branch* with honour to my sovereign, will gladden, as well as quicken, every step of my journey.

(Signed) R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 4th, 1791.

My Lord,

Nothing can exceed the pleasure with which I acquit myself of a most agreeable duty, in giving your lordship (not a detail of the numberless formalities observed in this day's assembly, but the *certain* information that the signature of the definitive treaty of

peace between Austria and the Porte, took place *this day in full Congress*, and that no one diplomatical sanction which can authenticate and legalise that solemn act, on the part of each of the contracting powers, has been omitted.

It was with great satisfaction that the mediating ministers were witnesses of the unaffected joy which the representatives of both of the principal parties showed at the restoration of concord between the two empires. The inclosed copies (in each of the languages) will furnish the most convincing proofs that the treaty is drawn up with the strictest adherence to the principles on which his Majesty's guarantee, and the full powers he had the goodness to intrust to me, were founded.

My positive duty ended with the signature, and I should have set out for Vienna, within the three or four days necessary for collecting the requisite post-horses at every stage, but, at the *earnest request of all parties*, particularly the *Turks* (who imagine that the security of the peace depends in some measure on my acquiescence), I have consented to assist in person at the exchange of *ratifications*, which ceremony will take place on the 15th inst. I the more readily comply, as with all the diligence I could employ through such exhausted countries, and amid the march of armies, I could not reach Vienna before the Emperor's departure from that capital.

It now only remains for me to assure your lordship that, as it has ever been the height of my ambition to prove myself an active and useful servant in executing the King's commands, if I have been so fortunate as to succeed on this occasion in obtaining his gracious approbation, I shall feel myself one of the happiest of his Majesty's happy subjects.

(Signed) R. M. K.

[*By the same messenger as the foregoing*].

MY LORD, *Sistovo, August 4th*, 1791.

Within a short space of time after the signature of the definitive treaty, the Austrian and Ottoman plenipotentiaries put the finishing hand to *their* separate convention; by which every pretension on the part of the Court of Vienna is obliterated, and every source of contest between the two contracting parties, is *effectually* and *definitively* precluded.

This act is entirely distinct from the definitive treaty, and *posterior* to it. It is concluded, without either formal *mediation* or *arbitration*, as an amicable arrangement between two Powers, *already at peace* with each other.

I flatter myself that on the perusal of the inclosed correct copy of the said convention, your lordship will find that the vigilant care with which my duty taught me to watch over its progress, and conclusion, has not proved unsuccessful, and that every article of it corresponds perfectly with his Majesty's constant desire to maintain the *equilibre* between the two empires, as much as possible, and without any claim to an equivalent, at the expense of Austria, being urged by the Prussian monarch.

Such, my lord, has been the welcome termination of the last branch of the business for which this Congress was assembled, and I sincerely hope that our gracious sovereign will judge it to be every way satisfactory.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

P.S.—I am happy to add that the Austrians have laid aside the thoughts of delivering a declaration (respecting the repair of fortresses) which, while it would have made not the least alteration in the reciprocal

obligations of the parties, would have manifested a lingering feeling of *ill humour* at the Turkish refusal of a stipulation on the subject.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistova, August 4th, 1791.

HUZZAH! my dear sisters! after drifting through storms, quicksands, and all manner of perils, for almost eight or nine mortal months, our political bark is safe in the desired harbour; safe in the *heart* of the harbour, with all colours flying, and not a flaw in her bottom!

To quit my metaphor, my dear Anne, learn and rejoice, that the definitive treaty of peace between Austria and the Porte was *signed and sealed* this day, on the precise terms which correspond with the King's benevolent wishes, and fulfil *every one* of those which the Administration made known to me.

In order to render the benefits of this peace as durable as possible, we have brought another very important point to bear, in rooting out *all seeds* of dissension between the two empires. A *separate convention* (entirely distinct from the treaty of peace) has been signed this evening, between Austria and the Porte, as an amicable agreement between two powers *already in peace;* and in virtue of some small and voluntary concessions made by the Turks, the limits and extensive frontiers of both empires are properly and irrevocably settled.

Thus, my dear Anne, this very difficult job of work is completely and handsomely finished; and without leaving either sting or tail behind it. I am happy to have proved myself an active workman in rearing one more monument (and a lasting one) to the good faith and national energy of Old England. If my King and country are pleased (and they will be so), I shall think myself amply rewarded. As to personal advantages, or

decoration, they are little in my thoughts; but if they come, they shall be thankfully received. I have the strongest proofs already, of the esteem and confidence of the King's confidential servants—these are at once my pride and comfort.

I and my faithful Stuart (to whose affection and assiduity I am much obliged), burn with impatience for our release from this narrow cage, but we must wait for the exchange of ratifications, which will be in less than a fortnight. Then for Vienna! with light hearts, and some remnant of Turkish piastres. You shall hear again. To-day I am in all the bustle of couriers and circular letters. Adieu, my dear friend, you share my satisfaction.

P.S.—I saw with real pleasure to-day that all the Turkish *apathy* and affected gravity gave way, at the moment when the cannon were fired on the signature of the peace—to real feeling, and joy at the event. The Ottoman plenipos embraced each other like blind beggars; and would have embraced *us*, had not the *melting mood* of their *dripping beards* forbidden that courtesy. I got a *monstrous* heavy sable pelisse put on my shoulders, at the moment I was fainting with heat. But *honour*, my dear Anne, is everything! Heaven guard you, and send us a happy meeting!

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 9th, 1791.

My Lord,

During the short interval of a few days which must yet elapse before the instruments of ratification can be received from Vienna and Constantinople, I find an agreeable occupation in listening to the public and unfeigned professions of perfect satisfaction which the ministers of the *Christian*, as well as of the Mahometan

monarch, vie with one another in expressing, at the happy termination of every branch of the business which occasioned our meeting here. Your lordship will easily believe that the mediating ministers think themselves peculiarly fortunate in having been able thus to reconcile the wishes of all parties.

Should our success in that difficult task hereafter be honoured with the approbation of our respective sovereigns, the Congress of Sistovo will perhaps be quoted in history as a singular instance of a long and *litigious* political assembly, at the conclusion of which, all parties were equally pleased. I am prepared to set out for Vienna on the *very day* of the exchange of ratifications.

No answer has been received by the Ottoman ministers from the Grand Vizier to their letters, announcing the signature of the definitive treaty. That answer is looked for daily, and with *impatience;* an officer of the Turkish Chancery, who was dispatched at the moment of signature, would reach the capital on Sunday last, and his return is expected on Thursday or Friday at farthest.

(Signed) R. M. K.

The delays and procrastinations of the "unchristian Congress" were destined to attend it to the *last.* Ottoman slowness, as it first suspended, now protracted its final conclusion; and (unhappily for the object of Turkish gratitude and predilection) a prolonged residence of a few autumnal days in Bulgaria, brought on illness, by which the unbroken constitution of Sir R. M. Keith received its first, and it is feared permanent injury.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 12th.

My Lord,

The Tartar couriers expected this day by the Ottoman plenipotentiaries from the Porte and from the army are not yet arrived; and I am sorry to acquaint your lordship that the delay of the Grand Vizier's answer does not surprise our Turkish colleagues, as they *hint* (with a mixture of concern and diffidence) that they have for a long time past been obliged to habituate themselves to the *slowness of all his measures.* The Vizier has many enemies in the Seraglio, and should the opinion (pretty openly expressed by the Turkish officers here) gain ground, that the confidence of the Sultan his master in his active talents has been misplaced, it may cost him his head, before his present campaign is at an end.

According to the best calculations we can make, both the instruments of ratification will be here on the 16th, and might be exchanged on the following day. But, my lord, as that will fall on a Wednesday (a most inauspicious day) we must not be surprised if the Turks, who have found that *every happy hour* of this Congress took place on a *Thursday,* should make it a serious point with the mediators to gratify their ardent wish, by putting the finishing hand to the whole negotiation on the morning of Thursday the 18th instant.

I shall have all my servants and carriages on the other side of the Danube on the preceding evening, and shall set out from hence an hour after the last ceremony shall be complete. I intend to make no stop on the road, and hope to reach Vienna in twelve or thirteen days. But should I meet on the road a messenger from your lordship, I shall travel, if necessary, night and day to fulfil his Majesty's commands.

R. M. K.

SIR ROBERT AINSLIE* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Constantinople, August 9th, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

Only two hours since I was honoured with your most welcome letters of the 1st and 4th instant, and although in the paroxysm of a tertian fever, I cannot consent to slip this first opportunity of a Tartar, who is to depart immediately from the Porte for Sistovo, to offer you my hearty, and truly sincere congratulations upon the happy issue of the salutary work of peace in which you, my dear Sir, have held such a distinguished place.

It affords me the highest satisfaction to be able to assure you that the Reis Effendi, the Lord Chief Justice of Roumelia, and other eminent persons to whom I sent compliments upon this important occasion, did all, in the strongest terms, express their personal gratitude for this, amongst other signal services so nobly rendered to their Court by Great Britain and Prussia; and the highest encomiums upon the dignified, able, and zealous conduct which you, my dear Sir, and your co-operating colleagues, have exhibited throughout the whole of your arduous and delicate negotiations.

It is very remarkable that no advices were received from Sistovo since the 24th ultimo, and that in the interval, the Sultan, in a manner besieged by a certain party, was daily, nay, hourly deceived by false and unfavourable reports. I refer you to my annexed letter to Lord Grenville, which I beg you will seal and forward; and wishing you a continuation of health, the greatest of blessings, I have the honour to be, with most sincere attachment, dear Sir, Your, &c.,

ROBERT AINSLIE.

* British Minister at Constantinople.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 19th, 1791.

My Lord,

In consequence of most unaccountable dilatoriness on the part of both the Imperial Courts, we are here on the 19th *at noon* without the ratifications of *either party!* There can be no doubt of their arriving before evening, and the exchange will take place to-morrow morning, after which I shall cross the Danube, and proceed some stages on my way to Vienna. The state of my own health (which has been a good deal shaken during the last *seven days*) would have exposed me to the risk of being laid up in some miserable hut in Wallachia if I had begun my journey sooner. But a pretty violent paroxysm of an ague brought on a salutary crisis yesterday, and Prince Esterhazy's physician assures me that I may safely set out to-morrow. I need not say how gladly I shall quit this *burning cage*, in which I have been confined for *eight* long months.

I am glad to be able to render my letters in some degree interesting, by the tidings brought to General Mitrowski at Bucharest, and forwarded by him hither with *all speed*, of the preliminaries of peace between Russia and the Porte being signed by Prince Repnin and the Grand Vizier on the 10th instant.

We are happy here in the supposition that our pacification has *essentially* contributed to accelerate the other. We have made our visits of *congé* to the Ottoman plenipotentiaries, and they have returned theirs. They have requested of the mediators to convey to their sovereigns the strongest assurance of the sincere gratitude of the Porte for the signal services for which the Turkish empire stands indebted to the magnanimity and friendly assistance of the three allied Courts.

A second paroxysm of the ague warns me to finish

this letter, and make up the packet for the messenger, lest a *third fit* should incapacitate me at the moment of his setting out.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistova, August 19th, 1791.

My dear Sisters,

Joy upon joy! and a miraculous increase! *Our* pacification has produced, and only *seven days* after its own birth (not its *equal*, for I pretend it can have no equal), but another hopeful babe, which will give satisfaction to all Europe. On the 10th instant Prince Repnin and the Grand Vizier signed the preliminaries of peace between *those two empires*, with an immediate cessation of all hostilities. So, my dear Anne, *all Europe is at peace;* and those who may, with a safe conscience, claim the merit of having essentially contributed to the restoration of that general blessing, have deserved well of humanity. There is not a grain of vanity, my dear friend, in this assertion; it proceeds from honest and liberal feeling.

I have been sadly fatigued these four or five days, and the heats have been almost intolerable. But all goes well when a man is making the last preparations to get out of a narrow cage in the hottest of all dog-days. I have just now had the parting visit of the three Ottoman plenipotentiaries, who show themselves more unaffectedly grateful than ever Turks did to Christians. What makes them the happiest of men is, that the Grand Signor has, in return for the copy of our peace, sent them his *benediction*—a term which his Sublimity never employs but to express unlimited approbation. We got these visits of ceremony over on both sides, in

order that I might be ready to set out the instant after the instruments of ratification shall have been exchanged through the hands of the mediators. This we hope to do *to-morrow*, and then, my dear sisters, for Vienna! where my superiors are desirous to employ my zeal for other good purposes.

I am sorry that the necessary attention to my health must make me travel (at least for the first days) by short stages. But I am determined not to play the fool by inflaming my blood in acquiring reputation as a *courier*. I shall be at Vienna by the 1st or 2nd of September, and in full time enough, as the Emperor's coronation at Prague is to be the 6th, and he will not return to his capital till the 11th or 12th.

So much for peaces and princes; now for a little domestic chat. I am sure my good friends at home are delighted with the success of my last great ramble. It will make me contented in my mind, and help to make me easy in circumstances to the end of my life. I know not what present the Turks intend to make us at the ratification, but they have treated us very handsomely throughout, and I should be ashamed to have put them to so great an expense, if the services we have rendered to their empire were not, in fact, the most important they have owed to mediators since they existed in Europe.

I have been at a very great expense, and know not yet what allowance is made me from home; and I am now setting out, with five heavy-loaded carriages, to make a second journey of eight hundred miles to return to Vienna. But I have no doubt of meeting with every sort of remuneration, as my superiors are more than pleased with my services. I have very good accounts from all my friends on the Continent, and expect still better from your island in a day or two.

My trusty comrade Stuart is well, and jumping for

joy to get once more into Christendom. To say the truth, a man must have a very serious object of pursuit to bear up against all the inconveniences and deprivations of this barbarous village; and our Bulgarian climate, of which I have so often boasted, has, since the beginning of these insupportable heats, begun to shake the constitutions of several of my people. But they are all getting well, and the exercise of *moderate* travelling is the best of all medicines.

August 19th.

The ratifications of neither party are at this moment arrived, my dear sisters, but they must be here to-day, and be exchanged to-morrow *early*; therefore I must make up this letter immediately, as I may be called upon unawares; for the Austrian interpreter (who sets out for Vienna the *instant* after the exchange) will be the bearer of it. Adieu, then, my dear sisters; be in no uneasiness about my journey; we have had rain, and the weather is now cool. Heaven bless you, and grant us a happy meeting!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Crajova, at least twenty miles from Sistovo, August 25th, 1791.

Now *His Name be praised!* in full chorus; for after exchanging the ratifications of the best peace which has been made these fifty years, and thereby laying in store of comfortable *reflections* for life, I set out, my dear sisters, on the 23rd in the evening, and made two stages to be once fairly on my way to a comfortable *home*. Yesterday I had my fourth attack of an honest regular ague, of which I am no more afraid than of a Miss's anger with her fan. For what the deuce has an ague to do in my carcase, or with what *can* it fight;

as in the last *fourteen days* not one grain of animal food has entered into my mouth. This is a sort of regimen which sets *Madame la fièvre* at defiance, and I will so *starve* the lady on the one hand, and so *bump* her on the other, that before I reach Vienna, she and I will be an hundred leagues asunder.

The Grand Turk behaved with great munificence towards each of the three mediating ministers, by giving to each of us at parting an order for *thirty thousand piastres*,* on his treasury, besides clothing us again in handsome sable pelisses (the last of which is really of value) and mounting us on an Asiatic horse, with a prodigious fine caparison. What with the Imperial present, and the remains of the *Tain*, (or money allotted for daily subsistence) a good round sum has been remitted by me to Constantinople; but there the Turkish coin, since its late debasement, is a drug which we shall find it hard to get off our hands, even at 25 per cent. discount, against any European place of exchange. No matter, my dear Anne, I have *money enough*. I did not go to Turkey with one avaricious idea about me; I certainly bring back none. But I carry along with me the greatest of all satisfactions, the certainty of having acted my part like a gentleman, and an upright servant of the Crown; and to have helped essentially in the general pacification of Europe; as the Russian peace is the genuine daughter (though I am afraid she will not prove the handsome daughter) of the peace of Sistovo. But enough of this; I hate boasting.

Stuart has not ailed one quarter of an hour; he is

* Whether from a higher estimate of the value of the present pacification, or depreciation in the value of money, or increased liberality on the part of the Porte: 25,000 were similarly presented at the Congress of Forzany, on conclusion of a treaty between Turkey and Russia, twenty years before, in 1772.

[illegible] Christendom. To say the truth, I had [illegible] very serious object of pursuit [illegible] against all the inconveniences and deprivations of this barbarous village: and our Bulgarian climate, of which I have so often boasted, has, since the beginning of these unsupportable heats, begun to shake the constitutions of several of my people. But they are all getting well, and the exercise of *moderate* travelling is the best of all medicines.

August 19th.

The multiplicities of another party are at this moment settling my dear sisters, but they must be here to-day, and be unhanged to-morrow *early*; therefore I must make up this letter immediately, as I may be called upon unawares, for the Austrian interpreter (who sets out for Vienna the instant after the exchange) will be the bearer of it. Adieu, then, my dear sisters; be in no uneasiness about my journey: we have had rain, and the weather is now cool. Heaven bless you, and grant us a happy meeting!

R. M. K.

SIR R. K. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Imperial Camp, twenty miles from Szistow,
August 23rd, 1791.

No *His Name be praised!* in full chorus; for after exchanging the ratifications of the best peace which has been made these fifty years, and thereby laying in store of comfortable *reflections* for life, I set out, my dear sisters, on the 20th in the evening, and made two stages to be once fairly on my way to a comfortable home. Yesterday I had my fourth attack of an honest regular ague, of which I am no more afraid than of a Miss's anger with her fan. For what the devil has an ague to do in my carcase

as in the last *fourteen days* not one grain of animal food has entered into my mouth. This is a sort of regimen which sets *Madame la fièvre* at defiance, and I will so *starve* the lady on the one hand, and so *bump* her on the other, that before I reach Vienna, she and I will be an hundred leagues asunder.

The Grand Turk behaved with great munificence towards each of the three mediating ministers, by giving to each of us at parting an order for *thirty thousand piastres,** on his treasury, besides clothing us again in handsome sable pelisses (the last of which is really of value) and mounting us on an Asiatic horse, with a prodigious fine caparison. What with the Imperial present, and the remains of the *Tain,* (or money allotted for daily subsistence) a good round sum has been remitted by me to Constantinople; but there the Turkish coin, since its late debasement, is a drug which we shall find it hard to get off our hands, even at 25 per cent. discount, against any European place of exchange. No matter, my dear Anne, I have *money enough.* I did not go to Turkey with one avaricious idea about me; I certainly bring back none. But I carry along with me the greatest of all satisfactions, the certainty of having acted my part like a gentleman, and an upright servant of the Crown; and to have helped essentially in the general pacification of Europe; as the Russian peace is the genuine daughter (though I am afraid she will not prove the handsome daughter) of the peace of Sistovo. But enough of this; I hate boasting.

Stuart has not ailed one quarter of an hour; he is

* Whether from a higher [illegible] the value of the present pacific- [illegible]ney, or increased liberality on [illegible]y presented at the Congress of [illegible] Turkey and Russia, twenty

an affectionate lad, and has been of great service to me. Pray if any of his friends be within your reach, let them know how much I value him. I rest here this half-day, to write to everybody; and to-morrow, *Madame la fièvre* being to make me (I hope) her last visit, I shall make two stages before the hour when she is used to come. I will receive her in a Wallachian hut, underground, (there being no other at Gogos); this will so disgust her, that I shall hear no more of her. The next day I arrive in good time at Czernetz, and Trajan's bridge; which last I will this time examine with my own eyes. The next day, Meadia, then Lugos, then Temeswaer, and from thence into Hungary, amongst civilized people. I shall make my way to Vienna with every maxim of prudence, except the Latin adage, "*festina lentè*," which I take to be illustrious nonsense; and made for no man who has public and important occupation awaiting him.

I hope to be at Vienna on the 5th or 6th of September, and consequently in full time to pay my court to the Emperor, on his return from Prague, where he is to be crowned on the 6th, and the Empress on the 8th of September. There is a pretty circumstance attending the latter coronation, which is, that this Emperor's eldest daughter (whose state of health did not allow her to think of matrimony) being appointed Abbess of the Noble Chapter at Prague, has thereby the right, which she will certainly exercise, of putting the crown on the head of her affectionate mother. That part of the ceremony is the only one I regret not to see. Basta! Don't you think, my dear sisters, that for a man who is *said* to be labouring under a heavy ailment, I have written a great deal?

So I have, my dear friends; and I will overdo in nothing. Love to all cronies; I have not time to enumerate them. Tell them all my affections grow

stronger as I grow older: they will not believe you, but the thing is true! Be in no shape in pain about my journey. It is the best medicine for me. The weather is not inconveniently hot, and the roads are excellent. Adieu. God bless you, and all the spinstership.

You shall hear again from Buda.

R. M. K.

P.S.—Don't forget the message about Stuart.*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, September 7th, 1791.

MY DEAR ANNE,

What you say is perfectly true; *six* words of sterling weight are worth a million. Look at *this date*, and rejoice! I arrived here in the morning of the 5th, a good deal fatigued, but with my health so much improved by the journey, that in a week or ten days, I shall be the rose in June, and the trout in the clear stream. I am honestly WELL and HAPPY beyond measure, because all my business has succeeded to my most sanguine wishes. I found all my friends here well. I expect a messenger every hour from England, with many pleasant and comfortable tidings for your brother. The *double* fruits of his labours are well

* Afterwards the well-known, and highly-distinguished Peninsula hero, Sir Wm. Stuart. Those familiar with the exploits of one, whose military ardour it would have been sacrilege to stifle under the harassing bondage of what his older soldier friend styles "tugging like the veriest slave, at the diplomatic oar," will appreciate the disinterested candour with which Sir R. M. Keith (at the risk of considerable disappointment to his gallant pupil's father) rescued him from an uncongenial slavery, and gave to the army of Britain one of its noblest ornaments. "I am persuaded" (writes he to Lord Galloway), "that you will *do well* to let your son follow the vocation, in which he has *every right* to expect promotion and honour. I will *be bound for his becoming an excellent officer.*"

known and approved at Whitehall,* and ere long you will, I doubt not, hear of something to his advantage.

I promised you *six words*. I have given you *ten*. My blessing into the bargain, and love to all.

N.B.—No more journies into Turkey!

Yours ever, my dear sisters,
With heart and good-will,
R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Sept. 7th, 1791.

My Lord,

After a journey more agreeable and expeditious than I had reason to expect, through the most inhospitable countries, and with a *tertian ague* for my companion, I arrived at Vienna on the morning of the 5th, and as my health has gained considerably by travelling, I am now in a situation to obey, with activity as well as alacrity, whatever commands his Majesty shall be pleased to honour me with.

Mr. Stratton (with whose assiduous endeavours to forward the King's service I trust that your lordship has every reason to be satisfied), has given up the pen to me, and I beg leave to return (for a moment) to Sistovo to mention the occurrences of the forenoon which preceded my departure.

* No idle boast. A letter of the *same date* from Mr. Dundas, (then high in office, and Mr. Pitt's most trusted colleague) thus says in writing to the "sister Anne" of the foregoing correspondence: "Lord Grenville is an exceeding good man, and your brother cannot be in better, or more honourable hands. This has been a busy summer for Sir Robert; and I daresay has given him a new stock of health and spirits. Nothing so good for both, as to be *put upon one's mettle!* He has been so; and it will give you much satisfaction to be informed by me, *not in ministerial style*, that he has done *incomparably well;* and in the conduct of an arduous and delicate negotiation, has managed himself so as to obtain our complete approbation."

Previous to the exchange of the ratifications of the two Imperial Courts, Prince Morusi, chief dragoman of the Porte, waited on each of the three mediating ministers apart; and in the name of the Sultan, he expressed to us the high sense that monarch entertained of the impartiality and perseverance which had been constantly displayed in the conduct of the mediators, and likewise the obligation he owed to their sovereigns for the equitable and solid peace, which was that day to receive its final sanction.

Prince Morusi then presented to each of us an order on the Imperial treasury, at Constantinople, for the sum of thirty thousand piastres, for the expense of our journey homewards. That sum, according to the actual value of the debased Turkish coin may be equivalent to about two thousand three hundred pounds sterling.

As soon as the instruments of ratification were exchanged in the Congress chamber, each of the five Christian ministers was invested with a handsome sable pelisse, as a distinguished mark of the Sultan's satisfaction. I found in the court of the Congress house, a Turkish horse, very richly caparisoned, which was likewise a gift from the Grand Signor, and in return I distributed handsome presents of gold watches and money (according to what is practised at the Porte on similar occasions) to each of the persons who had been employed in presenting to us those marks of the Grand Signor's munificence. I mention these circumstances only to evince the sincerity of the gratitude towards his Majesty which the Ottoman plenipotentiaries had been commanded to express, and to render manifest, by the distinctions heaped on the King's minister.

Promotions to high dignity have taken place among our *quondam* Turkish colleagues, and all three of them are ordered to Galatz to negotiate the Russian peace. Nothing could have added so much to the heartfelt joy

of the Prussian minister and my own at the happy termination of our negotiation, as our conviction that the pressing and repeated representations we had made by order of our Courts, to the Porte, and the exhortations we had employed with the Grand Vizier to overcome his repugnance to treat, on the terms proposed, had proved so fortunate, as to pave the way for the immediate conclusive signature of the preliminaries with Russia.

I am now to thank your lordship for the very explicit instructions contained in your dispatch No. 7, which came to my hands at the eve of my departure from Sistovo, and it gave me infinite satisfaction to find that under the guidance of your lordship's preceding commands, I had held a conduct in every point, respecting the acceleration of the ultimate conclusion of the whole business, and my own personal stay at the place of Congress, perfectly consonant to those orders which your lordship conveyed to me in the above-mentioned dispatch.

On the evening of my arrival at Buda, the messenger Basilico joined me there, and delivered to me your dispatch No. 8, in which the most welcome assurance which your lordship had the goodness to give me, of his Majesty's most gracious and full approbation of my services, filled my mind with true satisfaction and gratitude. In the view to hasten the arrival of Basilico at Constantinople, I dispatched him by the way of Belgrade, and gave him a letter to Marshal Wallis requesting his Excellency to forward Basilico, with a special janissary to accompany him. I wrote by him to Sir Robert Ainslie, in the precise spirit of your lordship's instructions; and I am persuaded that I may pawn my credit for that ambassador's exerting the most strenuous efforts to carry his Majesty's commands respecting the Russian peace into execution.

On my arrival here I made a round of the visits prescribed by etiquette at this Court. Most of the Imperial ministers are at Prague, but Prince Kaunitz being at his villa in the suburbs of the city, I waited on him there last night, and was received in a very polite manner. The only mention, however, which he made of our late negotiation was in these words, "*Je suis fâché mon cher Chevalier de toutes les peines que nous vous avons occasionnées là bas; et nous vous sommes très obligés des soins que vous avez donnés pour écarter les difficultés, et amener une conclusion heureuse.*" I assured him of the pleasure I had felt in contributing by the most impartial good offices, to so happy an event.

R. M. K.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, September 6th, 1791.

My dear Sir,

All your dispatches from Sistovo, to No. 94, inclusive, have been regularly received, and faithfully and expeditiously forwarded. As this will find you returned to Vienna, and Mr. Stratton's functions consequently suspended, allow me through you, to make my cordial acknowledgments to him for all the pleasure and information I have derived from his correspondence, and for the obliging attention he has shown to all the letters I have transmitted to him. To *you* I will not observe the form of acknowledgments; because, under the long friendship which has existed between us, I have had the good fortune to enjoy a full participation in all the details of your late important and glorious negotiation, from its birth to its conclusion. But I most cordially congratulate you on the satisfactory feelings which must remain upon your mind, in the result of that transaction; upon the solid credit which you have

acquired; and, in fine, upon the beneficent tendency of the whole affair, to the interests of humanity, and to the tranquillity of Europe.

If quiet continues in the Netherlands, and upon the borders of France, I imagine that you will now wish to make your correspondence revert to the ordinary course of the post; and whatever loss may arise from it to this mission, I cannot be so selfish as to wish to the contrary. I leave this to your reflections, assuring you most cheerfully that I have no wish but to see the business go on to the best advantage. If *you* remain at Vienna, and *I* return here, I think we may establish a very useful circular correspondence with whoever shall be at Berlin.

At present, I am in all the bustle of preparation for a short excursion to England. Lord Henry Spencer remains here as *chargé d'affaires*. I warmly recommend him to your confidence and favourable regards. Though very young, he possesses an excellent disposition for his career, and the most *consummate* discretion. The fleeting fault of being young, will, unfortunately for him, as for his predecessors—diminish every day. You have ever had the generous disposition to encourage and advance young men of promising talents; and you cannot have a better subject than the one now pointed out. Lord Henry will write to you if anything occurs here that may interest you, and will be happy to receive any commands from you.

Lord Elgin passed through this place last week. He had not been fairly treated by his colleague in Italy. In other respects, I do not consider the treaty of the 25th July as a subject of any uneasiness to England—*au contraire, à plusieurs égards*. The conferences of Pilnitz seem not to have produced any decision for active measures; perhaps it is best to have left the mad democracy to its own inventions. It will gradually, and

soon show to mankind the folly of attempting to ground a great government on abstract principles.

I am not quite easy as to the state of the Austrian Netherlands. There has been in that transaction a most unaccountable conduct at the Court where you reside. If they had acceded frankly and cordially, to the fair and friendly views of the maritime powers, they might have had a secure and permanent possession; at present it is, and will be, of a very different description.

Believe me, dear Sir, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Sept. 15th, 1791.

WHILST a courier from London is galloping to Vienna with all manner of pleasing and honourable tidings to me, I seize an hour of leisure to give you, my dear sisters, some account of my final transactions at Sistovo, and of my journey homewards. You know all about the tokens of distinction heaped on us the day the peace was *signed;* now for the exchange of the ratifications, a conclusive step on which the Turks laid infinite stress, and one where they judged my presence so indispensably necessary, that although I had the King's permission, (nay, even injunction,) to return with all convenient speed, to Vienna, I determined, and have since been applauded from *home* for so doing—to wait a fortnight, in order to put the finishing hand to everything, and to make the treaty of Sistovo the most complete work, as I trust it is the most *durable,* of the diplomatic kind which have been terminated for half a century. The slowness of the two Imperial Courts protracted my stay till the 23rd, and in that interval I had one of the greatest pleasures, and on the other hand, one of the most severe trials I could possibly

experience. I learned with the highest satisfaction that our peace, and our most earnest remonstrances, and entreaties at the Porte, and with the Grand Vizier, had produced the immediate result of the signature of the preliminary articles of peace between the Russians and Turks. This was, to the *British* administration, the most important and least expected of all political events. I am convinced that ministry feel that service rendered to their country as giving a tenfold value to the Sistovo treaty.

On the same day (the 16th August) that I sent those glad tidings to England, I was seized with a violent, but regular fit of the Bulgarian ague; and I had it pretty smartly on the 18th, 20th, and 23rd. Yet still I determined to set out on my return, the 23rd, an hour after the exchange of the ratifications. A German physician belonging to Count Esterhazy, told me I might travel with safety, lying by on the ague days. On the 23rd, the last ceremony was performed, and the Turks on that occasion, (as on several of the preceding ones) expressed by order of their sovereign, the most sincere gratitude towards the mediating Courts, and the highest esteem for the mediating ministers.

As a proof of those sentiments, I should tell you, my dear Anne, that on the 22nd, Prince Morusi, principal dragoman of the Porte, waited upon each of the mediators separately, and after the handsomest compliments in the name of his sovereign, he presented to each of us, an order sent by the Grand Signor upon his treasury, for thirty thousand piastres, to pay the expense of our journey homewards. That sum, according to the actual value of the debased Turkish coin, may amount to about 2300*l.* Our allowance for provisions had been so ample, that there remained likewise a surplus to be received on that score. So much for money. At the instant when the ratifications were delivered, each of us was again

invested with a *valuable* sable pelisse; and as I immediately shook hands *kindly* with all my Turkish and Christian colleagues in order to cross the Danube, I found in the court of the Congress house, another prancing Turkish steed (a better one than the first,) superbly caparisoned; being a last gift from Sultan Selim. With this token of his munificence, I returned home to get on my travelling dress; but not till I had given *six gold watches*, and many many small sums of money to *all* those Turks who had been employed to decorate, and to mount me, &c. &c.

I now take leave of Sistovo, my dear Anne, with inward satisfaction at having resided there, and heartfelt joy at getting away from it. I am now crossing the Danube in a fine Turkish barge, and firing my cannon; my four carriages and twenty servants are waiting for me on the Wallachian side; my heavy baggage and Turkish horses (to mount Stratton and Stuart) are to follow me by slow degrees; and now blessings from thirty Turkish throats, and I am in my chaise with two companions, honest Stuart and filthy tertian ague. The latter I was determined to fast down, and from that day to this I have not swallowed one atom of animal food. I travelled rapidly on my good days, and swallowed a little English bark; I made short stages on my *mawkish* days (for the ague soon abated), and ate nothing but thin soup and spinach. So I got to Vienna in twelve days and a half, with only a memorandum of the ague once in two days; as much as to say, "I am not yet gone, but preparing to go." Now, I can hardly distinguish one day from the other. *Punctum.*

And so, Mr. Robert (say you), you have come back again within a very small distance of Trajan's bridge, and know nothing more of that sweet bridge than when you passed it in a foggy day last December! The accusation is false, Mrs. Anne; I went (ague and all) to

the very BRIDGE itself, and to the Severiner Tower, and Stuart measured them; and what is more, we brought away stone, and brick, and mortar, in large lumps from each of them, and I am to get them polished and set in snuff-boxes, and you shall take your pinch with a bit of Trajan and of his mortar directly under *your nose;* —what say you to that? And I have a collection of models, and I have *ten* Trajans, and as many Adrians and Severus's; and I have Philip of Macedon, and I have Lysimachus, and I have Titus's daughter with her *strange curls,* and I have Alexander the Great, *fresh* as when he came from the Mint, and as comely a fellow as ever you saw. And now get me home to Scotland as fast as you can, for I am a *treasure* in the way of cracks.*

Heaven send us all a speedy and happy meeting.

R. M. K.

Note from Prince Kaunitz, accompanying the gift of the Emperor Leopold's picture:—

À MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER DE KEITH, ETC., ETC.

À Vienne, Nov. 3ème, 1791.

L'EMPEREUR voulant témoigner à Monsieur l'Envoyé Extraordinaire, et Ministre Plénipotentiaire du Roi de la Grande Brétagne, le Chevalier de Keith, le cas que fait Sa Majesté des soins que ce Ministre a donnès à la conclusion de la paix de Sistovo,—chargé le Chancelier de Cour et d'Etat, de remettre à Monsieur le Chevalier la boîte ornée du portrait de Sa Majesté Imperiale ci-auprès.†

Et le Chancelier, en s'acquittant d'un ordre aussi agréable, a l'honneur en même tems, de réitérer à Monsieur l'Envoyé Extraordinaire, les assurances de sa considération très distinguée.

* *Anglicè,* chit-chat.

† A truly Imperial gift, of uncommon value and beauty.

The five or six months immediately succeeding the return of Sir R. M. Keith from Sistovo, seems (from the very minute and interesting dispatches transmitted by him to Lord Grenville), to have been arduously and painfully employed in tracing and recording the fluctuations of counsels and opinions in the Austrian cabinet, regarding a rupture with France, which it seems probable, in spite of the suspension of active measures occasioned by the French King's acceptance of the constitution, would have taken place even had the life of the reigning Emperor been prolonged.

The increasing, perhaps natural efforts of the emigrant princes of the blood to invoke Austrian intervention, the madness and insolence of the National Assembly, on which *they* chiefly relied, as likely to exasperate the Emperor and his ministers; and, finally, the increasing danger of his sister and his family (with the pretext afforded for interference on behalf of the frontier princes of the empire), all seemed verging towards the actual commencement of hostilities, when the following communications (whose interest has been revived by the recent events in France) took place on the part of the British minister to his official principal. On the 14th January, 1792, Sir R. Keith thus writes to Lord Grenville:—

"It will not surprise your lordship to learn that the transactions at Paris in the last days of December, the haughty style assumed by the National Assembly in their decrees respecting Germany, and the threatening tenor of the French King's message to that meeting, have occasioned very disagreeable sensations here. The French ambassador received by a courier, on Wednesday, an official communication, which he delivered to Prince Kaunitz the same day, and the incident gave rise to a general report that a French invasion on the territory of Turin and Mentz was to be expected.

"Whilst the minds of men were agitated by the intelligence from Paris, the arrival, on the morning of Thursday, of the (pretended) Prince of Nassau, from Coblentz, gave a new spur to the curiosity of the public, to discover the nature of the commission with which he was charged by the Bourbon princes. He was admitted, on the same forenoon, to an audience of the Emperor, and he held, before night, two long conferences with Prince Kaunitz. My endeavours, in this critical conjuncture, have been most assiduous to collect authentic information, and I trust that the following particulars may be relied on. This Court, though much embarrassed, and not less alarmed, by the actual posture of affairs, continues to have recourse to palliatives only, and has hitherto adopted no steady or vigorous plan of conduct, and the evil day of decision is put off as long as possible.

"I am convinced, however, my lord, that this Court at length conceives the imminent danger of a rupture with France, and will proceed to make serious military preparations, on the first intelligence from Paris, that the measures they have employed towards the French cabinet are likely to prove ineffectual. With all this, I remain in the conviction that the reluctance of the Emperor to draw the sword is in no respect diminished, notwithstanding that he has been heard to say, within these ten days, that if the French madmen were determined to force him into a war, they should find that the pacific Leopold knew how to wage it with the greatest vigour, and would oblige them to pay the expenses of that war, in something more solid than *assignats*.

"18*th*.

"The resolution of this Court to march, very speedily, six thousand men towards the French frontier, and to hold in readiness a body of thirty thousand for the same purpose, is so publicly talked of here, that it must be

the wish of this Court to give the greatest degree of credibility to that warlike preparation. I own that I cannot discover a rational motive for this sudden and ostentatious display of vigorous measures, which are little of a piece with the known principles of this reign; and may, in my humble opinion, possibly rekindle French jealousy, at a time when it appears to be gradually subsiding. I am positively assured, and in the *utmost confidence*, by a person of undoubted credit, that all this is nothing more than an empty parade, and I have every reason to believe that this information may be relied on. Yet still the expediency of a demonstration of this nature, and at the present moment, remains to me an inexplicable mystery.

"I am but too often in the case of not being able to comprehend the conduct of this Cabinet, and perhaps your lordship will find it as difficult as I do, to discover the wisdom of a recent affront which (as I am assured by the advice of Prince Kaunitz) has been put on the French National Assembly. The decree by which they commanded the dispersion of the Brabant emigrants in French Flanders, has been sent back by this Court as inadmissible here, because it was promulgated by that Assembly, and not by the French King himself.

"21*st*.

"The Prince of Nassau makes no secret to his friends of the ill success of his negotiation here. He finds that some favourable assurances which the Emperor gave him, in his first audience, have been explained away by the Austrian ministers. They paid no attention to a plan he proposed of military operations, in favour of the Bourbon princes; and I understand that the only advice this ministry has conveyed through him to the French emigrants, is to remain quiet in the places of refuge which have been assigned to them.

"The steps which are taking here towards forming an

army of observation, are wholly unconnected with that prince's commission. The wish of this Court is to show a ready compliance with the suggestion of his Prussian Majesty, by preparing to support their joint language at Paris. They are desirous to cement all their future proceedings with the Court of Berlin, and intend to propose that the two Courts (when perfectly agreed on those matters) should make an explicit declaration to the French government, on the points which they have particularly in view, and on which their joint attention to the future welfare and tranquillity of Europe, makes it their duty to insist in the strongest manner.

"These objects are said to be four in number. The security of the French royal family, and the maintenance of the monarchical form of government in that kingdom; the restitution of all the possessions and rights of the German princes in the French dominions; the same justice to be done to the Pope, by restoring the county of Avignon; and lastly, a general amnesty in favour of the princes of the blood and their adherents, on reasonable conditions. The two Courts to notify, hereafter, the above declaration to the principal Courts of Europe, requesting their concurrence and co-operation.

"This, my lord, is the rough draught of a decisive measure the Court of Vienna is thought to have in serious contemplation, but of which the execution may still be at a considerable distance. I am assured that the Empress of Russia has renewed, (by a messenger who arrived here two days ago) her earnest exhortation to the Emperor to assist the princes of the blood, by a military force, in an immediate attack on France. Your lordship will judge how ineffectual that request is likely to prove at the present juncture.

"R. M. K."

"*28th.*

"The contents of the decree of the National Assembly of the 14th instant, with respect to the Emperor and Empire, occasioned much surprise here, after the arrival of the last French post. I have occasion to know that Prince Kaunitz had, in the evening of yesterday, no authentic information on that head: as he publicly denied all belief of such a manifest proof of what he termed the insolence of the French National Assembly. It likewise appears strange that the French mission had, last night, no ministerial communication of the said fact, and I do not hear that Monsieur de Noailles has received a courier from Paris. I take notice of these particulars in order to show that my utmost attention is turned to discover what effect that very rash step on the part of the French government may produce here. I need hardly remark to your lordship that, if the French be really in earnest, to act up to the terms of the above-mentioned decree, new and very vigorous measures must be taken here, and without any delay, to be properly prepared for the explosion of French foolhardiness.

"I am not surprised at Prince Kaunitz's professed incredulity last night, because he is accustomed to suppose that his pen carries conviction and terror to whatever quarter its dictates are directed, and that he will refuse, to the last possible moment, to believe that any nation can set his own logic, or the power of this monarchy, at defiance.

"*February 1st.*

"A courier from Paris brought to the French ambassador, on Saturday evening, a letter from the French Secretary of State to Monsieur de Noailles, which the latter communicated to the Vice-Chancellor, Count Cobenzel, and afterwards to Prince Kaunitz, in a long conference on Monday. I feel that it is of the utmost

consequence to discover the real sensation which the last communication from France has occasioned here, and the probable effect of it. I shall be very cautious not to mislead your lordship on a point of so great moment, and must therefore suspend my judgment for a few days.

"Notwithstanding that the French Secretary of State has undoubtedly conveyed the requisitions of the National Assembly, in as mild and temperate language as the nature of them could possibly admit of, there is great reason to believe that such peremptory questions have hurt and perplexed Prince Kaunitz to a very high degree. His first suggestions to the Emperor will probably have been, at least, very firm, if not haughty. But as that monarch dreads nothing so much as war, and is well aware that his next step in the French affairs must prove, in a great measure, decisive—I am almost certain that he will delay his reply to France till he has consulted his new ally and bosom friend, the King of Prussia. This opinion has been this instant confirmed by the person who has at this juncture the most free access to the secrets of this Court. It remains to be seen how the National Assembly will relish this slow method of proceeding.

"R. M. K."

[*Secret*].

Vienna, February 4th, 1792.

YOUR lordship will forgive my beginning this letter by saying that a man in my situation, who is carefully debarred by the Austrian ministry from the smallest share in their secrets, has a very difficult task, in tracing out, with any degree of certainty, the sudden variations of blustering vanity and timid irresolution, which occasion the desultory conduct of this cabinet.

Four days ago it was determined that no answer

should be given to France till the purport of it should have been concerted with the Court of Berlin. This was called cool and deliberate courage; and it was supposed that no mode of proceeding was so proper to intimidate the rash boasters of the French councils.

To-day (as I have good ground to think) another idea predominates, and it has been resolved to give a speedy answer to Monsieur de Noailles, and without consulting the tardy ally at Berlin. This step is now imagined to be the surest proof of unshaken magnanimity; and such it will be, if the language of that reply keeps pace with the Emperor's preceding declarations.

But, my lord, I in my conscience believe that I traduce the character of no great man in Austria by manifesting a suspicion, that the fear of a rupture with France has, at this moment, so far the upper hand, that it is more than probable the style of this cabinet will, in some measure, betray that secret in the ministerial office, which is to be delivered to the French ambassador.

I beg of your lordship to look upon this intelligence as tolerably authentic for the present hour; I dare not warrant that my report by next post may not be in contradiction to it.

It must be confessed, that in consequence of the many half measures, and abortive projects of this government, during the last two years, in respect to politics, finances, and military system, the monarchy is at present less able to meet a foreign war with becoming firmness, than at any period during a long course of years.

February 8th.

On Monday evening the French ambassador received a courier from Paris, with a new ministerial office, which he communicated yesterday to Prince Kaunitz,

in a private conference. It is believed to relate to the decree of the National Assembly of the 25th January, although that decree had not been sanctioned by the French King.

The sentiments of the French nation towards the Emperor have manifested themselves of late with so much acrimony, that it is difficult to imagine any degree of mitigation, in point of form or style, which can have rendered the commission of Monsieur de Noailles palatable to this Court. I have this instant learned that at the same time that he acquainted this Court that the King, his master, had put his *veto* on the decree of the National Assembly, he renewed his most pressing instances to engage the Emperor to give a speedy and satisfactory answer to his two ministerial offices, no reply having hitherto been made to either. I believe this Court is extremely puzzled how to maintain the Emperor's dignity, without adding fresh fuel to the French animosity.

February 15th.

My Prussian colleague has seen the minute of the answer of this Court to France. He thinks it well drawn up, with becoming dignity, and yet in terms which indicate the spirit of moderation and conciliation. It recapitulates, and justifies the whole conduct of the Emperor towards France, and proves that this Court is far from harbouring any hostile views against that kingdom. It denies all intentions whatever of spreading a counter-revolution; and alleges that the French King himself, by assembling the States General of his monarchy, had owned the necessity of new modelling the constitution, and had laid the foundation of that reformation. That the concert formed between several powers, relative to the French affairs, had arisen from the *then* existing troubles in France; the imminent danger to which the Royal Family was exposed; and

from motives essentially connected with the safety of their own territories. That the effect of the before-mentioned concert had been suspended by the French King's free acceptance of the constitution; that nothing but the renewal of the same dangers, and the prospect of the most sinister events, could call for the prosecution of such a concert; and that the Emperor remains in the most unfeigned disposition to show himself the friend and ally of the French nation.

This is nearly the purport of it, as I have been able to gather it from a rapid conversation with my colleague, who, on being asked his opinion of it, and if he had such objection to its contents as to render necessary its being submitted to his Prussian Majesty, thought it safer to approve of its delivery in the present form than to have a reference made to his Court, which he judged to be contrary to its wishes.

18*th.*

The contents of the answer are nearly such as I mentioned in my last letter. Baron Jacobi observed to Monsieur Spielman (when the latter showed him the paper) that two expressions it contained might perhaps produce a disagreeable effect on the irascible minds of the French leaders; the one in which the maintenance of the monarchical dignity in that country is stated among the possible motives for foreign intervention; and the other where, in distinguishing between the wise and moderate part of the National Assembly, and those members of it who appear to be actuated by very opposite principles—the latter are styled *frénétiques*.

I have learned that the French ambassador is of opinion that the Emperor's desire to avoid a rupture with France is sufficiently indicated in the paper; but he deplores the insertion of several phrases in it, and particularly the mention of the Jacobin Club, as the instigators of the rash measures of the National Assembly.

These expressions, he thinks, cannot fail to hurt the moderate men in that assembly, and will be eagerly seized by those who wish to create a quarrel, as a proof that the Emperor seeks to interfere in their internal affairs, and holds a language injurious to the patriotic party. Be this as it may, the decision of peace or war with the Emperor rests henceforth with the National Assembly.

R. M. K.

It was transferred ere long to a higher and more irresistible umpire. After the interval of little more than a year, Sir R. M. Keith (within a week from the above) was again called on to intimate to his Court the demise of the occupant of the Imperial throne.

So sudden and unlooked for was this event, that the following notice (in a P.S. of the 29th February) precedes but by one day the tidings of the fatal termination:—"I am sorry to acquaint your lordship that the Emperor has been much indisposed since yesterday morning, with an inflammatory fever. He has been twice bled, and I hear (although there is *nothing alarming* in his illness) that a consultation of physicians has ordered a third bleeding this evening."

[*By my servant Ferguson.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, March 1st, 1792.

My Lord,

I am indeed heartily sorry to find myself once more under the melancholy obligation of announcing to his Majesty the vacancy of the Imperial throne; the Emperor Leopold having died this afternoon, about four o'clock, of an inflammatory fever, which, falling on his bowels, resisted all the power of medicine, and carried him off very suddenly, in the third day of his illness.

An indisposition of long continuance, of which I made mention in my letter of 29th October, probably laid the foundation of the fatal malady. But the Emperor was so well in health on Monday last, that the Empress, and all the younger part of the royal family, were at the opera, on the evening of that day. It was not till the morning of Tuesday, that the inflammation appeared; and no serious apprehensions were entertained, till late last night. After four bleedings, and the application of several different remedies, his Imperial Majesty found himself easier this morning; but between three and four in the afternoon, the disease rose at once, to the highest pitch, and he expired, after a few minutes of agony.

It is needless to say that this sad event has plunged the royal family into the deepest affliction.

I shall use the utmost diligence in dispatching my valet-de-chambre with these letters to England, as soon as the Imperial post-office shall be permitted to furnish horses to the couriers of foreign ministers.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, March 1st, 1792.

My Lord,

As my servant, who is the bearer of the mournful tidings of the Emperor's demise, will not be allowed post-horses for several hours, I think it my duty to throw upon paper a few thoughts which suggest themselves to my mind (at the moment of that unforeseen event) touching the person and character of the new King of Hungary, and the situation in which he stands in several different points of view.

At the age of four-and-twenty years his constitution,

which was never very robust, seems to be in some degree shaken by the consequences of a violent tertian ague which he contracted in the Turkish war. During his late illness (mentioned in my preceding letters) he is said to have spit blood several times, but not to any alarming degree. What is to be feared at present is, that the violent shock of his father's decease, and the immense load of public business which falls so suddenly on his shoulders, may prove detrimental to his health, the re-establishment of which was announced to the public only ten days ago.

The train of life which he has led, both during the reign of his uncle and father, has been so much confined within the walls of the Imperial palace, and the communication which men in public character have had with this prince has been so constantly restricted to the narrow line of conventional duty, that perhaps no heir of a crown, arrived at the age of manhood, was ever less known to the higher classes of his father's subjects, or to the *corps diplomatique*.

What adds to the difficulty of forming a solid judgment in relation to what may be expected from his future reign, is this singular circumstance, that his education as an heir-apparent has gone through two distinct stages, as different in point of maxim and method as can well be imagined; so that nothing but experience can teach us what will be the result of the strong, rapid, and vehement precepts of government harshly impressed on his youthful mind by the imperious genius of the Emperor Joseph, or the cautious and fluctuating advice of his deceased father; who accustomed him to take some share in the laborious part of public business, but who, being himself in the prime of life, and naturally supposing that his son had many years before him to acquire the science of government, was (as I am told) less in a hurry than the late Emperor had been, to give

him a full view of all the springs of government, and a complete knowledge of the *weak* as well as *strong* parts of the great machine, which Providence has now committed to his guidance.

One quality of the Archduke's character has been long and generally established. He is known to be an honest man, fraught with the best and most upright intentions to fulfil his duties in every station with justice and humanity; and we have never heard even the slightest suspicion of his mind being tainted with a propensity to any vice which can sully his fame either as a man or a monarch. His talents, in as far as we have been witnesses to any exertion of them, appear to be sound and useful. To say more, with so small a share of authentic information or personal observation as has fallen to my lot, would be to run the risk of imposing on your lordship by a precipitate, and, therefore, an unwarrantable judgment.

King Francis finds, most assuredly, a very populous and powerful monarchy; not, indeed, in a state of unimpaired vigour; the reigns of the two last sovereigns having, in some measure, exhausted its resources for a little time. But the natural strength of it has not been dangerously wounded in any vital part (the Netherlands alone excepted), and a few years of steady and pacific government would, in all probability, restore it to its former flourishing state.

The Austrian army has, within a few years, been lowered considerably, both in regard to numbers and energy of spirit; and the nature itself of the Turkish war, joined (as I am afraid) to several other concurring circumstances, has occasioned some relaxation in its military discipline. However, the young King had an opportunity of acquiring very just principles of military knowledge under Marshal Laudohn, and (as we hear it affirmed on all sides) he had likewise the happiness to

imbibe, from the maxims of that general, as well as from his own experience of the dreadful calamities which follow wars of ambition, a sincere and deep-rooted aversion to offensive warfare. From such premises we have a right to presume, that this prince is so far acquainted with the military profession as to make a proper choice of the means to restore his army to its former vigour, and that he will be in no way prodigal of the blood of his subjects. The finances of this monarchy are undoubtedly at a very low ebb, which adds a double cogency to every motive for preserving peace with all his neighbours.

But the great question to be resolved at this moment rests, according to my humble opinion, not with *him*, but with the French National Assembly; and the die is probably cast before this time, as the Emperor's last declaration made at Paris seemed calculated to draw on an immediate and definitive decision on the part of the leaders of the French council. If, however, the door be still left open to amicable accommodation, I am pretty confident that the King of Hungary himself and his principal adviser, Prince Kaunitz (whose ascendancy in the present conjuncture will be greater than ever), will gladly embrace every means of conciliation which can be devised, without the manifest sacrifice of the honour of the Crown, or the infallible forfeiture of the esteem of the principal members of the Germanic body, whose suffrages King Francis will no doubt solicit, and without delay, for his election to the Imperial dignity.

Your lordship perceives that I make no doubt of Prince Kaunitz's being immediately entrusted with all the powers which hereditary regard, and the timidity of an inexperienced prince, can throw into his hands. I hesitate the less in delivering this opinion, as I see no other person near to the throne who could undertake (nor to whom the King could with any safety

entrust) the charge of public business at this unforeseen crisis.

I crave your lordship's indulgence for these hasty observations amidst a scene of general affliction and consternation, which is very apparent in this capital. The pacific disposition of the late Emperor had rendered him dear to the bulk of his subjects, who, being impressed with the fear of an impending war with France, seem discouraged at finding themselves under the government of a young and inexpert sovereign.

R. M. K.

March 7th.

The public interment of the deceased Emperor took place in the evening of yesterday, and his remains were deposited nigh to those of his royal ancestors, in the vault of the Capuchin Convent in this city. The general mourning will last six months.

I am sincerely grieved to be obliged to mention the alarming situation of the health of the Dowager Empress, who is extremely beloved by all ranks of people in this country. A slight bleeding on Sunday evening had so far alleviated the feverish complaint of the preceding day, that the *Grande Maîtresse* gave us, on Monday, the assurance that her Imperial Majesty was almost completely recovered. But, unfortunately, the rheumatic fever returned, with more violence, in the evening of yesterday, and we are very sorry to learn this morning that it has been found necessary to bleed the Empress three times, and that she has called for the Sacraments of the Romish Church, which will be administered to her this forenoon. I shall add a postscript to this letter, in the evening, and I hope with more favourable accounts.

I have renewed my old acquaintance with General Bischoffswerder, at Prince Kaunitz's assembly, and I

should have been glad to have had a more intimate intercourse with a person who stands so high in the favour of his Prussian Majesty, the ally of England. But Monsieur Bischoffswerder has hitherto given me no indication of a similar disposition, and I must therefore leave that matter entirely to his choice. He and his particular friends will dine at my house on Tuesday next.

[*Secret.*]

I have let the Prussian favourite know, by a sure hand, that he can see me every day, and at any hour. I am not a little surprised to find that he carries here his exhortation to immediate and vigorous measures against France, to a much higher pitch than could well have been imagined. He may have adopted that style on the principle (mentioned in my last letter) of doing honour to the elevated sentiments of his sovereign. But it would seem that he has it particularly at heart to proclaim, very loudly, the martial resolutions of his Prussian Majesty.

I have learned with pleasure, that the King of Prussia had advised the late Emperor, and had obtained that Prince's promise to write to his Britannic Majesty, along with the intended notification of their defensive alliance, to invite our sovereign to become a party in the new bond of friendship, recently contracted between Austria and Prussia. It was not to be merely an invitation to accede to the treaty, (lately concluded) but, if that could not take place, to bring on a treaty of defensive alliance between the King and himself. It is believed that the King of Hungary is disposed to take the same amicable step towards his Majesty, but not till after the first hurry of his accession shall be over. I think myself fortunate in being able to give your lordship timely notice of such a probable intention.

If Prince Kaunitz should hereafter open himself to me on the subject, I shall take everything strictly *ad referendum*. I must not omit to mention that within these *four days* that minister's behaviour towards me is wonderfully altered. He now shows me all the distinctions of a trusty favourite. But I am not the dupe of his trifling coquetry, though I receive it with the utmost politeness. I should not have taken notice of this circumstance, if it did not indicate some change in the disposition of this Court.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

P.S.—The Empress is somewhat easier this evening, but still the danger is very great.

March 14th.

My Lord,

The Empress's health is daily improving, and there are the best hopes of its speedy and entire re-establishment.

His Hungarian Majesty has sent an order to all the departments of government, to pay no attention whatever to anonymous informations, which had proved the source of great trouble and inquietude during the last two reigns. He has likewise extended the liberty of the press, by permitting a free discussion in print, of the future measures of his government. From these two instances, his subjects are disposed to draw a happy presage of the just and liberal spirit of his reign. He did Prince Kaunitz the honour of making him a visit, yesterday, at his house, and remained two hours in private conversation with that minister.

I find it extremely difficult to establish a solid judgment relative to the spirit of the answer which is soon to be given by this Court to the late communication from Paris. I have some reason to think the King of

Hungary wishes to unite dignity with moderation; that the Prussian favourite suggests not only a firm, but even a high language; that Prince Kaunitz is inclined to temperate measures; that Baron Spielman talks alternately in the style of haughtiness and of conciliation, and that Baron Jacobi (on whose penetration I am inclined to lay great stress) remains in the opinion that, amidst these various sentiments, the intimate conviction of the inability of this monarchy to undertake a new war, with any prospect of solid advantage, must, in the end, preponderate, and turn the tide, definitively, in favour of accommodation.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

March 21*st*, 1792.

The answer of this Court to the last ministerial office from France was delivered on Sunday evening to the French ambassador, who sent it immediately, by courier, to Paris. From all I have heard of the contents, the French government will learn from them that the sentiments of the new sovereign are the same with those of his deceased father, and his desire to maintain peace no less fervent. However, it is to be apprehended that that party in France which is known by the appellation of Jacobins, and whose influence in the National Assembly has of late predominated, may have the power, as well as the wish, of resenting and avenging the very strong imputations which are again laid to their charge in the new declaration from hence. But I need not trespass on your lordship's time by entering into further particulars relative to that State paper, which (according to the custom established in the actual government of France) will be printed in the Parisian papers, and be received in London before this paper comes into your lordship's hands.

The wild enthusiasm which impels the French nation at this moment, to accelerate a rupture with the House of Austria, may perhaps furnish to M. Bischoffswerder a better justification for his unwearied instigations to war in this cabinet, than his own very moderate abilities could have laid hold of.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, May 8th, 1792.

My Lord,

At the commencement of a war between France and Austria, which has not only burst asunder the unnatural ties which, for upwards of forty years, had connected these rival powers, but will, in all likelihood, be ultimately productive of an entire new system in Europe, it will be expected that I should give your lordship a general sketch of the actual state of this monarchy in respect to the government, finances, and military force. I shall deliver my opinion with the utmost frankness as well as candour, but I beg it may be understood that I speak with diffidence touching the character of the young monarch, whose personal qualities and mental powers have not yet been put to a fair and conclusive trial.

I assured your lordship in a former letter that his Apostolic Majesty is endued with sound (but not transcendent) talents, upright principles, and a natural steadiness of mind which may, when his faculties shall be ripened by experience, keep the effective government in his own hands. At present, he is actuated by circumstances which preceded his accession, and directed by men in office, who have grown old in the possession of much greater sway than either their parts, or their success in administration, could justly entitle them to hold. Their ascendancy, established and maintained

during the long reign of Maria Theresa, was wholly suspended in the lifetime of the Emperor Joseph; but it had recovered all its preponderance during the dubious and versatile reign of the Emperor Leopold. In the meantime, Prince Kaunitz enjoys, in supercilious state, all the prerogatives of a veteran and despotic prime minister, who, sitting supinely in his own closet, and without even paying, in three successive reigns, a single visit to his sovereign, pronounces political oracles, whenever he is consulted in the first instance.

I am now to mention the finances of this country, a matter in regard to which much mystery is affected here; and it has been rendered almost impenetrable by a rapid succession of reigns, and many fluctuations in the measure of taxation, and in the mode of collecting the public revenue. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to know what is the real balance of income and expenditure here. Leaving that subject in general to future elucidation, I need only observe, that the royal treasury is known to be very much exhausted; and that some of the ministers have been heard to declare, when the prospect of a new war drew near, that the King would be under the necessity of laying on his people the heavy war tax, to find the means of carrying on the *first* campaign. But since the war has been actually declared by France, his Hungarian Majesty has greatly endeared himself to his subjects, by publicly declaring that no additional tax shall be imposed for two years to come.

Very few persons in this country are acquainted with the nature and extent of the resources which the sovereign has found; a few millions of florins lately borrowed in the Low Countries, as many in Holland, and a small sum at Frankfort, could not suffice to render the war tax unnecessary. But I hear it credibly asserted, that the reigning family has long been in possession of

a common fund, arising from the inheritance of their forefathers, and destined to form the portions of the younger branches of it.

This fund has, by accumulation of interest, risen to a very large amount, and is vested in the Bank of Vienna under different names. The whole royal family, of the present generation, being now assembled here, have, by unanimous consent, given the entire disposal of that fund to King Francis, to meet the present exigency, and to be replaced in better times.

The conjectures I have heard touching the amount of this supply, differ so widely that I cannot take on me to mention a specific sum. But from this and other sources, your lordship may be assured that King Francis has the money necessary for two campaigns within his reach.

The Austrian army, though much fallen off from its former energy and discipline, is still composed of excellent materials, particularly in respect of the private soldiers. If the troops, on their approach to the frontiers, keep free of all contagion of French license and turbulence, the strong emulation which must necessarily arise from acting in conjunction with the best disciplined army in Europe, will, in all likelihood, revive the same energy and *esprit de corps* which animated the Austrians in the Seven Years' war; and the example of Prussian regularity, and subordination, may become the best cure for that sort of relaxation, which the Turkish war produced among the Imperial troops. Such a happy result is the more probable, as Prince Hohenlohe, the Austrian commander, is himself a rigid disciplinarian. A general reform of the internal economy of the army is still in agitation. Marshal Lacy, who, for twenty years, held the sole direction of military matters, is extremely tenacious of that plan he himself established. Yet he now feels that he must, in the end, submit to many and great alterations in that system.

Having thus thrown the best lights I am able, on the powers which this monarchy can exert, in the prosecution of a foreign war, I shall endeavour to give some account of its political situation in respect to other kingdoms.

It is with sincere concern that I must, in the first place, acquaint your lordship that the most unaccountable suspicions are daily increasing in the Austrian cabinet that a secret enmity subsists in England against the Court of Vienna. They pretend to have found a confirmation of those absurd suspicions in the delay of the election at Frankfort, which the King's adherence (in his electoral capacity) to the rules laid down by the Golden Bull, has occasioned.

The *reverse* of these opinions is well known to me, from your lordship's last instructions. But such has been the reserve kept up towards me for several months, and so striking the coldness manifested at the present crisis by Prince Kaunitz, that without committing the King's dignity to a very great degree, I cannot find the means of combating these unjust suspicions, unless I am honoured with your lordship's injunctions to demand an audience of the sovereign, or to force Prince Kaunitz to canvas those topics with me in a private conference, and to hold an explicit language to that minister in the King's name. I learn that Prince Kaunitz very recently expressed his hope that England will think herself under obligations to declare against France, if the latter power shall make an irruption into the Austrian Netherlands. He has never touched on this matter to me, nor do I wish that he should—since I am determined to answer no one question which may be put to me on that head, till I am favoured with his Majesty's commands for my guidance in it. Your lordship may be assured that all my language has been, and shall be, in exact conformity to your instructions, and such as

becomes the strict neutrality which his Majesty has embraced, and so scrupulously adheres to.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

[*Separate.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, May 8th, 1792.

My Lord,

The declaration of war which France has published against Austria, throws an insuperable bar in the way of an immediate negotiation of alliance between our Court and that of Vienna; as the King has, in his wisdom, adopted the resolution of maintaining the strictest neutrality in the French affairs.

In such a state of things, there remains not the smallest opening for any useful exertion of my zeal for the advancement of his Majesty's service at this Court. I, therefore, find myself at liberty to express to your lordship an earnest wish, which the shock my health sustained at Sistovo, and various circumstances respecting my personal concerns and comforts, have very strongly suggested to me for some months past; and which I am well convinced your lordship will judge to be neither ill-timed nor unreasonable.

After a mission of two years at Dresden, and a short, but very tempestuous one in Denmark, I have now completed a residence of *twenty* long years at Vienna. I have seen three reigns of the sovereigns of Austria brought to their conclusion; and I speak with disinterested frankness, in giving it as my opinion, that a fourth reign requires a fresh negotiator from England, with better spirits than I can at present boast of; as I must confess that mine are not a little jaded in following out the versatile politics of Austria through many tedious windings.

From these ingenuous motives, I beg of your lordship to lay before his Majesty my dutiful request to obtain his permission to retire from the diplomatic career and to return to England, as soon as it shall be found convenient.

I gladly seize this occasion to acquit myself of an act of justice toward my friend and pupil, as well as of duty to the King's service, in recommending very strongly his Secretary of Legation, Mr. Stratton, to transact the public business here, after my departure, till the person shall arrive who is sent to fill my place. I pledge my word to your lordship that this gentleman (who has served eleven years with me in this capital) is possessed of such talents and principles as will enable him to fulfil whatever instructions your lordship may honour him with in a very satisfactory manner.

At the moment when I solicit our gracious sovereign's leave to retire from the political profession, I offer my most sincere and grateful thanks to your lordship, and to all his Majesty's confidential servants, for the favourable opinion of my past services, which they have had the goodness to express.

In mentioning my future prospects, I trust that I shall stand acquitted in the eyes of all my superiors, either of stooping to the affectation of false modesty, or of harbouring any degree of unjustifiable presumption. The strong assurances which your lordship has repeatedly conveyed to me of the King's indulgent acceptance of my unwearied exertions, inspire me with the sanguine hope of owing to my beneficent sovereign, such a public testimony of his gracious and lasting favour, as will stamp a value on the services of my life, and effectually enliven those unambitious and social years which may constitute the remainder of it.

R. M. K.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, May 17th, 1792, at night.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Monsieur de Burt is so obliging as to furnish to me the occasion of sending a few lines to you by a courier, who leaves this place to-morrow. The notice is so short that I am obliged to crowd what I may have to say within the compass of a quarter of an hour. I wrote to you on the 15th, by the post.

Your servant arrived on the 16th, with your very interesting dispatches of the 8th. I forwarded him immediately; but, as there was a severe storm that day, I doubt whether he will have sailed before this morning.

I perused your two dispatches with great pleasure and advantage, and return many thanks to you for sending them through my hands. The idea that the British Cabinet (and particularly Lord Grenville) is unfavourably disposed towards the Court of Vienna, is also much circulated here; and, in truth, I have not taken any pains to remove it; because I have thought it likely to sink in its own groundlessness, and, at all events, of no material consequence. I have great reason to suppose that these reports have arisen from certain vivacities which make a great part of the correspondence of Monsieur de Stadion, and the gentleman mentioned at the head of this letter. *Quant au fond de la chose,* we certainly are not peculiarly enamoured of the Austrian ministry. The whole history of Reichenbach was not of a nature to inspire either love, or respect, or admiration; that of the convention of the Hague was still less so; and the conduct respecting the ratification was deficient both in good faith and good sense. It is, however, amply and sufficiently punished; and we stand relieved from a guarantee which we *were* willing to have taken and to have enforced.

Our system, as far as I can learn, is to maintain our neutrality, unless circumstances should arise in the course and conduct of the war, to make it for the interest of the kingdom to swerve from that neutrality. Under that principle it is hardly probable that England will accede to the invitation now waiting for an answer. If the French had, in their "foolhardiness" (I thank you for the term), overrun Brabant and Flanders, and menaced or disturbed this country, I think our conduct might have been different, and we must have interfered to stop their progress. As it is, the allied army is likely to have easy work, as far as mere fighting is in question, though it may be hard work to effectuate any good settlement. If the Vienna ministers wish to be well with us, they should begin by meeting you with that frank and manly confidence on all occasions which you are so peculiarly entitled to, both by your personal and political character.

A word as to England. The bulk—under which word I comprise *nineteen-twentieths* of this nation, is contented, and decidedly anti-Gallican; and against all levelling or innovating ideas, and duly and fully sensible of their own unexampled prosperity. With such materials, and so vigilant a government, I feel no uneasiness, though the times are *very mad*. I send you two papers of the most recent date. There have been various little popular disturbances at London, Edinburgh, &c., which, though wholly unconnected with the wild and wicked theories of the French philosophers and missionaries, have yet been such as to merit a strict and steady attention in times like the present. Everything by the last letters was quiet, and *stocks rising*.

Ever, my dear Sir Robert,

Most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, May 29th.

MY DEAR SIR,

I seem to wait in vain for the return of your servant through this place from England. I write this, therefore, to say that all yours (to No. 50) have been received and forwarded.

The personal intention to which you allude, had already transpired, I believe first through your Belgian colleague, and afterwards from England. I sincerely regret it, for the sake of the service; and have expressed my sentiments thereon to the King's ministers in those terms of friendship and cordial esteem which present themselves when I have occasion to say anything respecting you and your long career—to twenty years of which I have been more or less a witness.

The events of Europe multiply with great rapidity, but it is difficult to reason on the subject so long as the views, conduct, and concert, of their Hungarian and Prussian Majesties remain, to a certain degree, unexplained. In the meantime, it is horrid to think that whatever may be the result, the measure will probably be productive of an effusion of human blood, far beyond any adequate necessity or interest. Poland might have continued half a century under the infirmities of her new constitution without giving any just cause of uneasiness to her neighbours.

A measure of precaution, which it has been thought right to take in England against the impudent and profligate votaries of the Jacobin worship, seems to have given a momentary alarm; but our government does not feel any serious uneasiness, and there is every reason to be confident that we may long maintain our quiet and prosperity; though in the *incertitude of human affairs* (of which we have lately seen such *marked and*

multiplied instances), it would be presumptuous to *neglect any measure of vigilance.*

Yours,
AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

June 8th, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Your letters have been duly received and forwarded. Mine to you are sent always at the same time with those of the Dutch ministers. It is an idle transaction if they are put aside for one post, to be copied, et *tres maladroit*,* and also little worth while. The inaction on the frontiers of Flanders still prevails. The French commanders seem to find it unsafe to attempt to avail themselves of this most favourable moment that they can expect, for striking a blow. La Fayette has his *neck between two halters*, and it is sometimes reported that he is negotiating at Brussels, and sometimes that he is retiring from the command. I cannot feel compassion for his distress, and shall not be sorry to see it increased. It seems to me that the utter want of discipline, subordination, money, confidence, and communion of sentiment which now prevails in France, may make it easier to effectuate a counter-revolution than could have been imagined a few months ago.

I have just received a letter from Coblentz, in which there is the following paragraph:—"On dit que les armées réunies sous Luchner et La Fayette, tenteront une affaire générale du coté de Mons, vers le 15 de ce

* It is an amusing coincidence that this epithet should have been used by Prince Kaunitz to Sir R. M. Keith, on the latter complaining to him (and not without reason), that the *copies* surreptitiously taken, of his dispatches, had been returned to him instead of the *originals*. "Que ces gens sont *maladroits!*" was all the remark of the unabashed Austrian Minister.

mois; qui'ls joueront de leur reste, et que les Autrichiens seront assez forts pour le leur gagner. Il serait possible que l'on trouvât que ces idées vont trop vîte." The accounts from England continue good.

Believe me, my dear Sir, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 15th.

DEAR SIR,

Your servant arrived at an early hour this morning. I have allowed him six or eight hours for refreshment. Nothing can be quieter than England. There is to my feelings, great and true glory in the wisdom of the national temper and conduct, amidst the *follies and madnesses of other nations;* and I think it will be so considered hereafter, in the sober page of history. When the letters came away all was quiet; the three per cents. were *ninety-three.* The revenue was comparatively higher than ever, and a small squadron preparing for exercise in the Channel. As to foreign politics, you will have heard that Spain is offering her mediation. *J'y trouve un petit brin de radotage,* and am astonished of my old friend, D'Aranda. The suspension of events on the frontier continues. It will probably be found that the French forces have been exaggerated; for nothing but a total want of power to act can account for their not acting.

Chauvelin is continuing to pester Lord Grenville with impertinent, ill-judged, and irregular notes. His object probably is to do mischief; but he does not know how to set about it. I understand that an attempt has been made to print a *Welsh translation* of the "Rights of Man," for the edification of our mountaineers. This reminds me of what happened lately in the port of Lisbon, when the officers of the Douane discovered, in a

French vessel, two *hogsheads* full of the "Rights of Man" in the Portuguese language!

My very latest letters from England give very pleasant accounts of the right temper and tranquillity of the two islands. It appears highly probable that the Empress of Russia will adjust the affairs of Poland in whatever way she may best like.

Ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD GRENVILLE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Whitehall, June 19th, 1792.

SIR,

Your several dispatches were received in due time, and have been laid before the King.

At the same time that I am to transmit to you his Majesty's gracious permission for you to return to England, pursuant to your request, I have it particularly in command from his Majesty, to express to you his entire approbation of the whole of your conduct in the various important negotiations entrusted to your care, in the course of so many years' residence at the Court of Vienna.

I cannot but lament that the state of your health should be such as to occasion your retiring from a line in which you have so ably distinguished yourself; and I shall greatly regret the loss of a minister of your long tried abilities and experience.

You will be at liberty to set out from Vienna as soon as you find it convenient; leaving the official papers in the hands of Mr. Stratton, as his Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, till the arrival of the minister whom his Majesty may be pleased to name to succeed you.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GRENVILLE.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 21st, 1792, 4 o'clock.

My Dear Sir Robert,

Your messenger arrives just at the moment of sitting down to dinner with the Dutch minister, and a great assemblage of our countrymen—the Duke of Buccleugh, Mr. Dundas, junior, Lord Granville Leveson, Lord Borringdon, &c.; and from dinner we go to a crowded circle, on the return of the Princess of Orange; after which I shall be confined to a royal card-table for the rest of the evening. I think it better, therefore, to send away your man, and to write a shabby letter, than to detain him for the sake of a more voluminous performance.

You receive by your servant the permission which you desire, to return to England; and I presume that you will avail yourself of it without delay. I am sorry, however, that it is for the purpose of retiring from the diplomatic line; your loss will, without any compliment, be severely felt. If the troubles of France induce you to come by this road, and to pass three or four days with me at the Hague, I shall at least derive one benefit from those troubles, and shall be sincerely glad to have the occasion of renewing old habits of friendship, and of talking over the *three hundred years* of eventful history which have intervened since we last met. And here too, there are many to whom you are known personally; and still more to whom you are known by fame, and by the respect which is due to you.

Your dispatches of the 13th arrived here by estafette, this morning at ten, and at eleven they were on the Helvoet road. I consider their contents as of the highest importance to England, and as the

consummation of our good fortune, glories, and prosperity.*

It would lead me too far if I were to attempt to look into the wide field of continental politics at this moment. All the accounts from France say that the troubles in the interior and at Paris, are at their crisis; and at the frontiers the generals dare not trust their troops. And yet, it is not impossible that when the combined Courts come to a settlement, they will be almost as much embarrassed as the National Assembly is at present. It would be a whimsical result, but it is possible that all parties may, at last, call on England to adjust the business. In the mean time, and without forwarding, or even wishing for such a result, our game is that of perfect neutrality, and separation from the whole struggle, and all its concomitants.

Do not believe those who tell you that there is any unusual proportion of faction at present in England. I have tolerably good intelligence on that subject, and am convinced that the strict peace and tranquillity of the two islands never were more secure. I fear that I write neither legibly or intelligibly, but you are an excellent decypherer. I will continue to address occasional letters to you, and Mr. Stratton will open them without scruple.

Believe me, my dear Sir Robert,

Ever faithfully yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, July 10th.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I have received yours of the 27th of June, and forwarded its inclosure. In the mean time the

* The first intelligence, forwarded by Sir R. M. Keith, of the termination of the war in India.

arrival of your servant at Vienna will have put it in your power to move homewards; and as you seem to have a strong appetite for a few mouthfuls of native air, I almost doubt whether you will receive those few lines before you set out.

Mr. Stratton's servant was detained four days at Helvoet, and in the channel, by that cruel gale from the west, which prevailed during the first week of this month. His dispatches, however, though their contents were in part anticipated, contained some authentic documents, not before received, and furnished matter for an extraordinary Gazette. It will not escape your remark, that though this pacification was so desirable an event, and though its conditions are great and glorious, our stocks have not risen. I am unable to explain this circumstance, so contrary to all reasonable speculation. It was easy to suppose that the treaty might be disagreeable to our troops, who, in the career of their glories, would not have disliked the plunder of Seringapatam, and also to a few hot-headed individuals in England, who love nothing that bears any semblance of moderation; but to the general mass of the country, and the proprietors of the Company, it ought certainly to give a permanent and solid satisfaction. We are now opening our eyes and ears for daily news from the French frontier. It is conjectured that Luchner and La Fayette have deviated from any intention of pursuing the attack on the Austrian Netherlands, and that the whole force will soon be diverted to the Rhine. The internal distractions of France seem to be tending to some new and terrible crisis. In the mean time above two months have expired since the wanton declaration of war, without producing anything to the aggressors but small losses and great disgraces.

The alliance between the Courts of Petersburgh and Berlin will be a new incident in the politics of the times.

It is a curious thing that in the year 1790, the accession of Ockzakow should have been considered at Berlin as so dangerous an advance of the Russian power, that it would be expedient to make war to prevent it—and that in 1792 the acquisition by Russia of absolute influence over all Poland, should be regarded by Prussia not only with indifference, but complacency. Political circumstances vary so rapidly in the present age, that all speculations are idle.

Monsieur de Chauvelin, amidst the strange notes which he thought proper to give to Lord Grenville, presented one to desire the King to use his influence with the States General, to prevent their taking any part in the war. Lord Grenville has answered in a few lines, that the same principle which prevents his Majesty from interfering in the internal affairs of France, prevents him from mixing or intruding himself in the councils of an independent state.

This place is become the sole thoroughfare betwixt England and the Continent, for our countrymen; and no innkeeper on the Bath road greets so many new faces as I do. Believe me ever my dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

MY DEAR SIR, *Hague, August 11th*, 1792.

In the daily expectation of the repassing of your servant (who I now learn went by Ostend) I have postponed writing longer than I could have wished. I should not, however, have had much to say if I had written. It is an epoch of events, and of farther preparation for events; but both the causes and consequences are so notorious that the Gazette contains everything.

You will have heard, long before you receive this, that

the Austrian and Russian treaty was signed at Petersburgh on the 14th of July, and that the Petersburgh and Berlin treaty were expected to be signed in the course of the same month. As I have long been at a loss to comprehend either the principles or policy of the powers bordering on Poland, I see many of these incidents with nearly the same impression that I should feel in perusing a book in an unknown language. In general reasoning, these multiplied alliances (especially when there is a radical incompatibility of interests) lead to nothing but the virtual annihilation of all treaties, and the reference of the whole system to contingencies and circumstances. I do not believe that the armies under Luchner and La Fayette, amount effectively to thirty thousand men. But the National Assembly has supplied the deficiency by assuming functions of Omnipotence; and by declaring, with an equal portion of modesty, morality, and religion, "*Que les peuples courageux et sagement gouvernés* (*c'est-a-dire par les Jacobins*) *sont la Providence du monde!*" It is a strange age! and there are so many *royal and political manufacturers de l'étoffe dont on fait les revolutions,* that we seem likely to pass the remainder of our days in a bustling world. Ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, August 13th, 1792, 8 *p.m.*

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Hislop, after being three days on the sea, arrived here this evening. As I am desired to make him find Lord Henry Spencer on his way, I send him by Dresden; the detour is not great. I take the occasion to recommend Lord Henry to your friendship and protection. The more you know him the more you will

like him; and he is so discreet, that you may talk with him in the fullest confidence without scruple.

Hislop carries your credentials to the new monarch, that you may take leave in due form. I am sincerely sorry, for the sake and for the credit of the foreign service, that you are ceasing to fill your part in it. But I do not wonder that you wish to live a proportion of your life in the enjoyment of respectable tranquillity among your countrymen and friends. You will have seen, I believe, four sovereigns during your ministry at Vienna. More than twenty years are now elapsed since we first met, as men of business in Cleveland Row; and the period has been so eventful, that we may seem, to our feelings and recollections, to have lived more than fourscore years. You will leave the Continent in a wonderful confusion. With respect to the Courts of Berlin and Vienna, it is a dispute among the learned, which of them has duped the other; but it seems to be generally agreed that they were both duped by the Empress; and I agree with you as to the probability of their being both at war with her before many years elapse. As to Poland, its monarch has made but a poor figure in that business. I chiefly regret the fifteen or twenty thousand lives which have been sacrificed to no end.

As to the French story, it is now like the fifth act of a most interesting tragedy; *and I wait the dénouement without attempting to conjecture it.* I can easily imagine that the combined armies will advance into the country with more or less resistance; but what is to be the result? What the new settlement? By whom shall it be made—and how maintained? All this, "caliginosâ nocte premit Deus." *

* The political sagacity and acumen of these letters would alone have justified their insertion. Their applicability to the present crisis, during which they might have been written, lends them a double interest.

I should mention to you, on the subject of Lord Grenville's dispatch, by the messenger, that the draft of his Majesty's answer was, previously to its being decided, communicated to the States General, with that full confidence which subsists among us, and approved of by them; and that their answer, which is to the same purpose, and in some measure in the same expressions (only with a shade of more respect and deference), is settled, and now circulating through the provinces. I suppose it will be forwarded to Monsieur de Haeften in a few days.

Adieu, my dear Sir Robert; I cannot write more at present. It was my wish to have sent you a long scrawl; but I am just recovered from a feverishness of four or five days, and am afraid of writing much. My compliments to Mr. Stratton.

Ever yours most sincerely,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Sept. 10th, 1792.

MY LORD,

The last functions of my mission at this Court were fulfilled yesterday morning by the presentation of His Majesty's letters of recall, in my audience of leave of both their Imperial Majesties. I therefore send back the messenger Hislop, with every species of information I have been able to collect at this period, when doubt and instability in the councils of this monarchy, together with a dismal succession of unprecedented events in that of France, render it extremely difficult to carry the eye forward, even to a very moderate distance, in determining the direction of Austrian politics.

Of one interesting circumstance I can speak with some degree of certainty, and it is this :—

The character and principles of the Emperor Francis, whatever may hereafter prove the extent of their energy or steadiness, are undoubtedly very different, and in some points almost in direct opposition to those of the Emperor Leopold.

Either unable to penetrate so deeply into the mysteries of *State-craft*, or wise enough to despise them, his son soon made known his eager wish to pursue, if possible, a plain and even path in politics; little anxious about his being deemed less shrewd than his father, provided he could earn a reputation of sincerity. I am not presumptuous enough to foretel what rank the Emperor Francis may have a right to hold ten years hence in the catalogue of wise or able monarchs—and, perhaps, that may in a great measure depend on the virtues and talents of his ministers*—but at this hour he has not only the manners and expression of ingenuous youth and an untainted mind, but every person, whether well or ill-disposed to his government, agrees in praising his love of truth and moral rectitude.

The very great embarrassment into which his father's inconsistent politics and rash engagements round the whole compass, threw the young monarch at the very moment of his accession, which became also that of the most important decision, can hardly be conceived.

This dilemma, though not of his own creating, taught him to look around him very carefully on every side, and endeavour to discriminate with his utmost ability what powers were best able to maintain the equilibrium of Europe, and which of them ought to be regarded as the natural friends and allies of his House.

* True of many sovereigns, but especially so of Francis, and Prince Metternich.

It required but a very small share of sagacity to discover, that whoever had by blunder or false prejudice prevented Austria from having Great Britain for an ally in the actual crisis, was highly blameable. The increasing difficulties of the war against France have served, progressively, to strengthen this principle; and although the good effect of it may be far distant, and that events of various kinds may protract, nay, hasten or ultimately annul its efficacy, I am not afraid of misleading your lordship, when I lay it down as a well-founded opinion, that a future alliance between his Crown and that of Great Britain is a *state maxim*, which took an early, and, I hope, deep root in the Emperor's mind.

I now proceed to fulfil the promise I made to your lordship in my letter of last Wednesday, by specifying the exact expressions which his Imperial Majesty employed, in speaking of his sentiments towards our royal master.

In my audience, on the 2nd instant, I accompanied the delivery of the letter in the King's handwriting, with those expressions of his Majesty's sincere esteem and regard, which your lordship had given me in charge. The Emperor heard me to an end, and then replied as follows:—

"From the language you held to Prince Colloredo, and Count Cobentzel, when you announced this letter, I was happy to learn that the King of England was well satisfied with the first steps of my reign, towards himself and the British nation. I hope, by my future conduct, not only to maintain, but to strengthen that good opinion on which I set a high value. I easily conceive that situated as I am, at present, and as Great Britain is, there may exist, on the side of your sovereign, very cogent reasons for postponing the formation of that more intimate connection, between his Britannic Majesty and me, which I proposed, and sincerely wished

to accomplish. The unhappy turn of the affairs of France drew me, unavoidably, into the war I am now pursuing. The calamities which are daily accumulating on the French royal family, and the danger of contagion from the horrid principles which predominate to the most violent pitch in that miserable country, render it more and more necessary, that I should, in conjunction with my allies, exert the utmost efforts to bring the war to a speedy and decisive termination. I trust that we shall be able to effectuate that great end in a short time; and then I shall be well pleased to find the King of England disposed to evince that esteem which he so kindly professes, by connecting the interests of the two nations, in a close and permanent manner."

In my audience of leave yesterday, his Imperial Majesty again made use of expressions of the same purport, though in broken sentences, and with less formality. But he concluded that subject by a phrase which contained a frank avowal of an error, into which his predecessor had fallen, and which he is desirous to correct.

On my saying that it had grieved me to learn what had passed during my absence at Sistovo, and that some one of his father's subjects had found means to destroy the fairest prospect of seeing the two Crowns in alliance—his Imperial Majesty answered with a good deal of emphasis—"I am sorry for it too, and I am persuaded that this country never found itself so well as when it was in alliance with England." The precise words in French were, "J'en suis faché comme vous; et je suis persuadé que ce pays n'a jamais *si bien fait*, que lorsqu'il était en alliance avec vous."

I shall not trouble your lordship with any detail of what the Emperor was pleased to say to me on my departure; but it did me great honour, and furnished

one more proof of the high esteem in which the principles of a British subject are held at Vienna.

Here then it behoves me to lay down the political pen; but I shall ever retain a just sense of the obligations I owe to my superiors. My efforts, during the course of five-and-twenty years in this line, have been unquestionably assiduous. It rests with others to determine the degree of merit to which they can, in justice, lay claim. I have the honour to be, with great respect and regard, &c.

R. M. K.

Anxious as Sir R. M. Keith had long been to relinquish a situation combining the necessity for an incessant petty vigilance over the proceedings of others, utterly foreign to his nature,* with a political inactivity, the more irksome from its contrast with his late scene of important though troublesome negotiation, *he* was too faithful a servant of the Crown to desert his post at the commencement of a new reign, till he had laid before his principal a summary, equally useful and masterly, of the state resources, political, financial, and military, of the empire, and of the supposed disposition

* Perhaps a more irrefragable proof of the truth of the above assertion can hardly be found than in a short official letter of this precise period.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Feb. 15th, 1792.

My Lord,

I had the honour to receive along with your lordship's dispatch, on Monday last, his Majesty's additional instructions on the subject of *Foreign Secret Service Money;* and shall not fail to pay the strictest obedience to them on any occasion that might hereafter occur.

In the meantime, I have the satisfaction to assure your lordship, that in the five-and-twenty years, during which I have had the honour of serving his Majesty, in various foreign missions, I never charged a *single shilling* for Secret Service Money to the account of Government.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. Keith.

and principles of the new monarch. Having discharged this duty to his sovereign and country, with all the energy and minutencss of his first dispatch, twenty years before, and all the results of that twenty years' experience—he felt at length at liberty to consult his own health and enjoyment; and redeem from official toil the remainder of a life, alas! too soon to terminate.

Those who have accompanied (and it is hoped not without feelings of respect for the minister, and partiality towards the man) the subject of these pages to the close of his diplomatic career, and the threshold of that *home* towards which, during its whole period, he had so often and fondly looked—will be pleased to learn that Britain fulfilled for him during a few privileged years, if not the sanguine visions of domestic re-union in Scotland, of which the death and dispersion of most of his nearest and dearest forbade the realisation, the more sober anticipations of friendly enjoyment in the society of many of the attached comrades and constant correspondents of his maturer life. His successive town residences (in Privy Gardens and Grafton Street) became the favourite resort of all such members of the "Gang," so often mentioned, or of his numerous "Vienna lads," as resided in, or visited London; where the select, yet *récherché* dinners of the quondam ambassador, were long remembered for the zest imparted to their chosen circle by the host's unaffected welcome and unrivalled powers of conversation.

His love of green fields and walking (which never deserted him even during twelve long years passed at one time within the walls of Vienna) found exercise in summer excursions to the country seats, whose names the previous correspondence has rendered familiar; where hosts of Campbells, and Drummonds, and Yorkes, and Sebrights, vied with each other in welcoming him to share their social enjoyments.

There cannot, perhaps, be a more striking proof of his preference for these, over all the unsatisfactory pomps, and hollow courtesies, to which he had been so long a victim, than that in the last note extant from his pen, (written only a few days before his sudden dissolution), accepting one of those friendly invitations, a stipulation occurs, "provided you have no great men or ministers with you, for in truth I am sick of them!" Unsophisticated in character by a sojourn in Courts, unchilled in heart by sixty-five years' intercourse with the world, unbroken in spirits by the long yoke of political servitude, it was almost in the exercise of cheerful hospitality that the life of this great and good man found a characteristic conclusion. A few intimate friends (among others Baron Jacobi, the Prussian minister in London, with whom he had formed a peculiar friendship while filling a situation at Vienna) had dined with Sir R. M. Keith, at a villa he then occupied near Hammersmith; after seeing them to their carriages, he was struck down on his threshold, with an instantaneous and fatal effusion of water on the chest; and died lamented, as he had lived beloved, on the 7th of July, 1795.

The half century which has since elapsed, and the consignment to the grave, within that period, of all who could have given information, precludes the melancholy satisfaction of ascertaining, in which of London's crowded and desecrated cemeteries repose the ashes of the subject of the foregoing sketch; or whether (as can scarcely be doubted) a tablet there once bore the now perhaps obliterated record of his worth. Monumental inscriptions, however, all are aware, are too uniformly laudatory, and bear too strongly the impress of recent grief and family predilections, to carry much weight with impartial posterity.

It may, perhaps, therefore, prove a more valuable

tribute to the unquestionable excellencies of Sir Robert Murray Keith, to quote, in characterising them, the testimony of living friendship in the person of an illustrious foreigner, whose own high moral worth and literary attainments rendered him every way qualified to judge of similar endowments in others; and whose estimate, after long and intimate intercourse, of the character of one, his admiration for whom (says more than one traveller) certainly amounted to *enthusiasm*, is expressed in terms to whose elegant significance in the original, a translation can do but faint justice.

The value, however, of such a testimony must ever depend on the moral worth and mental superiority of him by whom it is borne. The writer was Monsieur de Dalberg, coadjutor, and successor in the event of his demise, to the Elector of Mayence; a prelate spoken of in the highest terms by all who had the honour of his acquaintance; a privilege procured by Sir R. M. Keith for such of his young English friends as visited Erfurth or Ratisbon, at both which places and intervening country seats, he extended towards them a hospitality at once princely and paternal.*

Exercising important functions in the state, in familiar and unreserved communication with the Emperor, and enjoying, like the friend he commemorates, with peculiar zest the innocent pleasures of society, he yet found leisure for the diligent cultivation of the mind; rising at four in the morning to pursue the severer studies of

* "I shall always rejoice" (writes Lord Ancram) "at having come to Erfurth, since it has procured me the acquaintance, and I hope friendship of Mons. Dalberg; the most amiable and respectable of men."—"We have just heard (writes another Englishman to his family, from Vienna), "that Mons. de Dalberg is chosen Coadjutor to the Elector; which secures him the Electorate at his death. This has given the highest pleasure to *every one here*. Even the *Nuncio* could not help testifying his joy; although he knows Mons. Dalberg is no friend to the Court of Rome."

algebra and mathematics, in which he carried off two principal prizes given by the Academy of Munich.

Such was the man who (judging, no doubt, of another congenial spirit by the model in which Nature had moulded his own) wrote to Sir R. M. K. "In reading the character of Montrose as drawn by Hume, I congratulated myself on knowing the man who resembles him; whose great and noble soul does honour to humanity; whose society enlightens my understanding, and inspires in my heart a passionate love of virtue. If ever in danger of faltering in the path of duty, I will say to myself, 'Remember that Keith honours thee with his friendship.'"

In justice to this elegant scholar (of whom one competent judge writes, "Jamais je n'ai vu d'homme avec des connaissances plus étendues"), the beautiful original effusion of friendship must be given in its own words:— "En lisant le portrait de Montrose par Hume, je me suis félicité de connoître l'homme qui lui ressemble; dont l'âme, vraiment grande et belle honore l'humanité; dont la société éclaire mon esprit, et *passionne mon cœur pour la vertu,* et si je bronche dans le chemin du devoir, je *me dirai,* '*Songez que* Keith t'honore de son amitié!'"

One other letter, more interesting to humanity than meagre records of funeral obsequies, will serve to show the friendship "strong in death" of the "Philip Yorke," whose honourable career it had been for twenty years its subject's pride and pleasure to follow with approbation; and whose last act of filial piety to his deceased Mentor, may not inappropriately usher in a similar (and final) tribute to the memory of the gifted sister to whom the following was addressed.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE TO MRS. ANNE MURRAY KEITH.

New Cavendish Street, November 11th, 1795.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I take the earliest opportunity to acquaint you that I have this day been performing the melancholy office of presenting to the King the insignia of the Order of your much lamented brother, and my excellent friend and protector.* His Majesty was pleased to say, as I expected, many very handsome things of Sir Robert; and seemed to speak of him with real regret, as an old and faithful servant of the Crown. His Majesty expressed himself with much kindness, and I am sure with equal truth, in respect of his talents and character. He agreed most perfectly in what I ventured to add, as my opinion, that he was one of the few persons in this island, who possessed a complete and general knowledge of foreign countries, and to whom, for instance, so inconsiderable a person as myself, could resort for information upon all subjects of that description.

In my answer to his Majesty's inquiries (which are always minute upon occasions where he takes an interest, as well as his memory and information accurate) I told him that the care of a little girl, of about eight years of age,† had devolved upon you. "Well!" said the King, "it will be fortunate for the child. She is a very sensible woman." This compliment to you,

* The peculiar circumstances, under which, it will be recollected, these insignia had been originally conferred, must have awakened in the royal mind, long dormant, and touching recollections.

† The Editor of the present work; whose filial gratitude to the admirable "guide of her youth," will find more eloquent expression in the following exquisite letter. If the "condolence of a King" have power to soothe sorrow, how much more the appreciation of a *Scott!*

and some inquiries respecting Lady Hardwicke's relationship to your family, concluded the conversation.

Though melancholy ideas are excited by such details, yet I thought it would not be disagreeable to you to receive them, while fresh in my recollection. There is a melancholy pleasure in reflecting that the object of one's particular sorrow, is as generally as justly regretted; and though there is, in truth, no more real weight in the condolences of a King, than in those of another person, the habits of the world make one attach a value to them, which it is impossible not to feel; and in this particular instance, I consider it not only as the civil speech of a sovereign, but of a very worthy man, who had opportunities of knowing the valuable parts of the character which was the object of it. In speaking of the knowledge of foreign countries, his Majesty said many civil things of my uncle, Lord Dover; and in that respect, he joined him with your brother in the same class.

Believe me ever, dear Madam, very sincerely,

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

HARDWICKE.

SIR WALTER SCOTT TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. LINDSAY.

Edinburgh, June 13th, 1818.

DEAR MRS. LINDSAY,

I have the honour to acknowledge, with sincere and grateful thanks, your kind letter accompanying a curious and valuable antique ring, as a memorial of our late excellent friend, Mrs. Murray Keith. Nothing could have been more acceptable to me than such a token of remembrance, for I held very dear the place which she allowed me in her esteem; and it was not the less valuable to me that I owed it as much to her kind partiality in favour of a friend, as to her judgment,

which was too correct to have ranked me so highly as an author.

We, who have, so much longer than the ordinary period of human life, enjoyed the society of this excellent woman, and who *can never know any one who can be to us what she was,* and cannot but reflect upon her virtues, her talents, her exquisite elasticity, and at the same time, kindness of disposition, must always hold everything sacred that is connected with her memory; as one who lived among us with the recollections of a former generation, yet, with all the warmth of heart, and clearness of intellect, which enabled her to enter into the events, and interests of our own. I never knew any one whose sunset was so enviably serene; and such was the benevolence of her disposition, that one almost thought Time respected a being so amiable; and laid his hand upon her so gradually, that she reached the extremity of age, and the bowl was broken at the cistern before she experienced either the decay of her organs, or of her excellent intellect. The recollection of her virtues and her talents is now all that remains to us; but it will be a valued treasure to all who shared her esteem.

Amid the fortunate circumstances of our friend's life, it was not the least that she had around her in the evening of her days, relatives on whom the kindly affections in which she indulged could be so worthily bestowed; and in bequeathing her mortal remains to the chapel at Balcarres, she laid them to rest amongst those who were deservedly most dear to her, and by whom the bequest will, I am sure, long be regarded with affectionate veneration.

Once more, dear Mrs. Lindsay, accept my grateful thanks for a favour, of which I am most sincerely sensible. I intend to have the ring adjusted to my finger, and to put the name of the former proprietor upon the

circle; that those who may succeed to it hereafter, may value it accordingly. Mrs. Scott joins me in requesting to be respectfully remembered to Mr. Lindsay on his return, and to all the family at Balcarres.

Believe me, with much respect, dear Madam,
Your much obliged, and most faithful humble servant,
WALTER SCOTT.

THE END.

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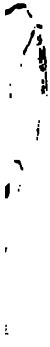

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